THESE SHIFTING SCENES

CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL

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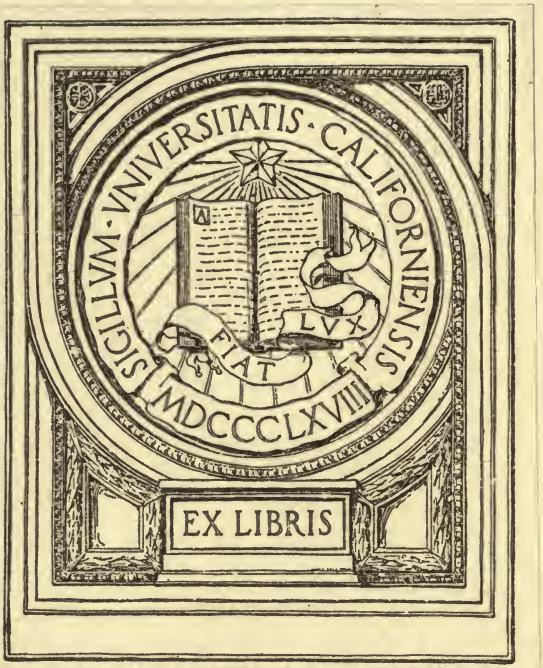
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BY

CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL

AUTHOR OF "WHY I AM A SOCIALIST," "THE UPRISING OF THE MANY," "LAWLESS WEALTH," ETC.

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I

OLD DAYS WITH THE TRAMP PRINTERS

On my way home in the summer dawns from my father's newspaper office, I was sometimes aware at the railroad crossing of strange figures clambering down from passing freight cars, or maybe dodging furtively along the tracks. These, with a reluctance I suppose to spring in part from the cheerful memories of youth, I concede to have been of the order of tramps. In one corner of my mind I knew even then that they were tramps; but after a time they seemed far otherwise to me. Dirty, unkempt, always vagabonds, sometimes in sorry rags of raiment and sometimes too plainly marred and scored by drink and wild living, they were the most picturesque, and, on the whole, the most interesting tatterdemalions that have moved across my range of vision. Long ago the old race of journeyman newspaper printers perished from the earth: regrettably, I must think, for to life in small towns their comings and goings gave a peculiar relish not to be supplied, certainly, by the type-setting machine before which they vanished. Of their own kind they were; most restless of the birds of passage, driven from town to town by what seemed a goading frenzy for travel; and yet the able masters of a noble art, the very kings of their handicraft. About many western towns must still linger the fragrant traditions of their achievements, their marvelous skill and speed in setting type, or their sure touch

on a difficult display advertisement, their illimitable capacity for strong drink and the unmatchable force of their profanity, culled from the choice products of many climes.

In travel their accustomed mode was by box freight cars ("side-door palace cars" in the phrase of their kind) and that is why my homeward path so often crossed theirs at the railroad tracks; in that convenient hour of dim light they were emerging from a freight train or seeking to board one; for I suppose I hardly need to explain that their transit was invariably without the consent or knowledge of the railroad authorities. In our latitude their migrations began in the spring, when nights were growing warm, and ended at a safe margin before the first snow, by which time the freight trains had borne them usually southward; though sometimes they hibernated in New York. Full men they were by reading and travel; they knew every corner of the continent, they knew all newspapers and the characteristics thereof; and for general information on current topics they had no equals. The printer is always intelligent and ready-minded; experience and changing observation had schooled these to a kind of wisdom, and the dangers of their life set them apart and gave to even their rags the dignity of romance. Moreover, they were often possessed of the literary sense, of an excellent taste, and of the ready address of men of the world. I have seen one of them, but newly come from a freight car, sit in his soiled and scanty attire at the telegraph editor's desk and work with such skill, precision, and speed as shamed us all and taught us our business. And now I recall a seedy scalawag, odorous of beer and bad tobacco, whose pockets were perennially empty of coin, but filled with scraps of poetry, which he

delightedly collected, and at a certain stage of his libations would recite with good voice and good discretion. And there was another that of nights, when the work was done, was wont to entertain us with imitations of eminent actors in Shakespearean rôles, and then "jeff" for drinks on the corner of an old imposing stone. "Jeff"—alas the day! And now I suppose even that cheerful but wicked custom has fallen from its ancient seat among the delights of men!

Without exception these visitors were capable of earning good incomes and without exception they were chronically destitute. Their practice was to enter a town, obtain a few days' work as "subs" (substitute compositors) in some newspaper office, cash their "strings," become intoxicated, spend what they had made and speed (at the railroad company's sole expense) to their next place of alighting. Employment they were always sure of wherever they condescended to ask for it, and being natural philosophers, alternately stoic and epicurean, they lived without care and, from their own point of view, exceedingly well. The nomad in them was irradicable. Once, I remember, we caught one of them young, as Dr. Johnson says of Scotchmen, and thought to do much with him, for we offered him editorial positions and what we were pleased to call a career. For a time these seemed to promise well. Bathed, shaved, and garbed, even to an unaccustomed collar and a gorgeous necktie, in the habiliments of civilized man, for three days he whom we would fain lure from vagabondia stalked gloomily the streets along, eyeing with manifest disfavor his image as reflected in store windows. At the end of which time he sold his new clothes for three dollars, donned his rags, which with rare forethought he had hidden under a lumber pile, and on

the next freight train faded from among us. Him we saw no more until that time next year. Then, after the manner of his kind, his late experience with his benefactors had become as if it had not been, and entailed no more of obligation; if, indeed, they were benefactors otherwise than in their own minds, as to which I own a reasonable doubt.

Along the front of my father's office and about a foot from the ground was a broad ledge whereof the architectural purpose was and remains with me mysterious but of which the practical use was toward the summer repose of weary printers. We were a morning paper, and composition began with us at the somewhat unusual hour of half-past two in the afternoon. Before twelve o'clock the printers were wont to appear to distribute type for the day's setting, an operation called in the trade "getting in their cases." Between the time when their cases were filled and half-past two they had usually some space of leisure, which, in fair weather, they passed upon the ledge, for the office stood on the shady side of the street. Then in the group's center could be seen one of my friends from the freight cars sitting in state as became royalty, grave, impassive, taciturn, gazing straight before him, wrapped in serious thought. To him behold on either side three or four of the local contingent, the pillars of our regular force, turning a respectful attention that they might hear what wisdom should chance to fall from august lips. He was dirty and they were clean; he was ragged and they were whole; he was disreputable and disorderly and they were of the straight walk. But lo, how honor peereth in the meanest habit! This frowsy person had traveled, he had lived in New York, in a large familiar way he talked of Ann Street and Park Row, he had seen cities

of men and manners, and of his vocation he was marvelously an expert, a magician of the types that made them fly under the bewildering compulsion of his grimy hand.

On the ledge the group feels an impulse to silence, waiting for greatness to speak first. There has been talk of New York, the favorite topic; New York, the newspaper Mecca of those that dared; New York, the far away shrine of perfect printing, the wonderful metropolis, in the mists of imagination looming great and strange.

"Is old Bill Smith still night editor on the *Herald?*" one ventures at last, willing to show a familiarity with matters metropolitan.

The great man shifts his tobacco, turns slowly, and for an instant, upon his questioner a look of gentle pity as of one very patient with the ignorance about him, and once more gazes straight to the fore. Then from the oracle a solemn voice:

"Old Bill Smith's been dead these two years."

At which silence reigns again.

But sometimes the great man, mellowing with obvious homage or much beer, condescends to curse heartily the town, the office, and the type used therein (which is large and unprofitable to printers), and being thus relieved in mind, to be led into the fields reminiscent wherein his discourse is worth any man's hearing. He has had some characteristic experience with Horace Greeley, he has had those wonderful hieroglyphs for copy, he has chatted for moments with Charles A. Dana, he has seen the younger Bennett minutely, directing his own composing room, he has picked up in newspaper offices that curious, inside, actual history of events that is always so different from the printed and accepted records. He knows of John Reid's momentous activities on election night of 1876, he

knows the swift moves that then overturned the verdict of the ballot boxes; he knows why John Kelly hated Tilden; he knows why Conkling hated Blaine; his talk plays lightly and without ceremony around all the colossal figures of the day. About his memory float the fag-ends of a thousand stories caught from the full streams of newspaper office gossip. He has watched old Dr. Woods "make up" the New York *Sun;* he has gathered some secrets of that strange and forgotten wizard. He has seen Samuel Medill in the composing room of the Chicago *Tribune,* or again, Wilbur F. Storey in the office of the old Chicago *Times* cursing until everything turned blue. With keen eyes and a mind acute to such impressions he has observed and noted the peculiarities of a thousand famous men. He has worked in the government printing office in Washington; he has set up the speeches of John Logan; he has made the corrections in the president's message. He has been everywhere, seen everything, and once started to talk his language is a marvel of authoritative expression. For he wastes no word; he deals only with the very heart of speech.

His way of life has, too, a certain lawlessness, fascinating, I fear, to us that dwell placidly in these rural regions. From ocean to ocean, from Canada to Mexico, he travels, yet he pays no fare, he troubles himself naught with tickets nor with baggage. Sometimes he rides on a pile of lumber, sometimes in an empty cattle car, sometimes crouched in imminent peril on the bumpers. He is above the ordinary considerations of fear as of prudence. He has ridden hundreds of miles on the trucks of an express train, clinging with hands and very finger-nails, choking in clouds of dust, and maddened by the frightful din, the grinding wheels two inches from his nose, horrible death plucking

him by the shoulder. He has clambered in the dark over swiftly moving freight trains, dodging irate and armed brakemen. He has been shot at and has fought at bay for his life; he has narrowly grazed suffocation in a carload of grain. Whenever, his "string" being cashed, he makes his exit from any town he takes his life in his hand, he goes hob and nob with death. Yet care for these vicissitudes he has none, nor for the morrow. To him the chances are no longer haggard; he has summed all life in this, that he may gratify his insatiable appetite for change.

Of this tribe was one whose real name had been lost in years of continental wandering but was known to us as "Scotty," for whose annual visit we looked as for the coming of spring. He was past fifty, a sandy man gone gray, and in despite of much liquor and hard living singularly active and even athletic; short, squat, and powerful. He must have begun with a good education, for he knew the classics and once corrected a local clergyman in a quotation from the Æneid, of which this ragged person was genuinely fond. Of his origin as of his name he was reticent, but it appeared he had served in a Northern regiment in the Civil War and had won distinction, which he had thrown away for drink. I can well understand that his dauntless courage and resourceful mind must have made him a valuable soldier. He had a lieutenancy and was on the road to a command when in some irremediable way his cups tripped him. Later he was a military telegraph operator, I think likely under another name. The war over, the joys of travel claimed him, and when I knew him he was a confirmed wanderer and periodical inebriate.

I was nineteen years old, an apprentice telegraph editor trying to learn the business from the bottom, and with some impulse of pity or sympathy he chose to take an

interest in me, an attention he bestowed upon few. Of an evening when he happened to be sober and not working he was wont to lounge into my office and sit with me and show me the secrets of the copyreader's art, in which he was particularly adept, having been schooled and seasoned under many masters. For the difficulties of head writing he had a marvelous facility and I used to wonder at a man that had such command over apt, pithy, and forceful expressions and had made for his own advantage so little use of it. In time he became communicative and bit by bit I gathered the thread of his adventures.

After the war he had felt an odd desire to return to the South and for years he passed or was buffeted from one Southern city to another, the victim usually of some misadventure. He had shared in the establishing of the carpet-bag government of South Carolina and had narrowly escaped shooting by the disaffected populace. He had tried to edit a newspaper in Mississippi and some too candid criticism of local society having aroused a prejudice against him he approached his office one day to find it possessed by a mob that had thoughtfully brought a rope to hang him. In good time he dodged into a cornfield where he lay all day, having the rare pleasure of hearing discussed the exact manner of his killing if he should be taken. He had known that eccentric genius, Will H. Kernan, and had set type on the *Okalona States*. Once he became sole compositor, proof reader, and assistant to a man that for prudential reasons published a newspaper from a flat-boat moored in the Mississippi River between two states. The papers when printed were ferried ashore at night and, I think, smuggled into the post-office. Some of the editor's remarks having reached an unendurable frankness, offended fathers and brothers gathered one day

on opposite banks of the river and took pot shots at the boat and its occupants. The editor ensconced in the bow with two rifles and some revolvers answered in kind while Scotty tried to get below the water line, and well-aimed shots came through the deck house. Some indications of a long siege appearing on shore, where a rope hung suggestively from a tree-limb, the editor cut the cable at night and drifted out of range.

Scotty's next appearance was in New Orleans, where he had been a witness of the uprising that drove out the carpet-baggers and where he had even held office, being for twenty-four hours the custodian of some thousands of dollars of the public funds. He escaped by night from New Orleans and made his way to Texas, where he had mind to turn rancher, but stopped on the way to buy a weekly newspaper, for five dollars in gold and an unused ticket to Waco. He found the bargain dear, for the enterprise was plastered with mortgages and the office beset by angry creditors; and he left by the back door, traveling (by freight) to Texarkana. There he managed a shooting gallery for a man that was compelled by circumstances over which he lacked control to a hurried departure from town, whither he never returned. Scotty found the business uncongenial, bequeathed it without compensation to an exhilarated stranger, and betook himself to the printer's case and freight trains whereby he worked gradually and gratefully Northward.

At the time of my acquaintance with him he had established a circuit from which he never varied except that once instead of giving his patronage to the railroads he stole a skiff and floated down the Mississippi to New Orleans, a place he greatly esteemed as a winter resort. On the first of March of every year he started for Mobile;

thence with the spring he moved upon Atlanta, and so by way of Washington to New York, which he held it to be his Christian duty to see every year and of which he knew every nook and corner. As summer came on he fared toward the golden Northwest, where, he said, the air was better for his lungs. Once, in a fit of athletic enthusiasm, he had undertaken to walk, sleeping of nights in schoolhouses and barns; but he said the silence and loneliness of the country upset his nerves, the singing of the crickets made him hysterical, and he was brought to perceive the true value of the railroad system of the United States, which enabled the deserving to be transported without exertion and without expense.

It was impossible not to like this rascal, notwithstanding his life, which no doubt traversed all principles of ethics and sound economics. Moreover there were times, I must needs confess, when the practitioners of sound economics and the rest stood a little abashed in his frayed and disreputable presence. An old woman sold apples and lemonade under the stairs near the office and of her he was accustomed to make daily purchases—if so be he had funds. None of us ever thought about her; she was like the stairway, she had always been there and always would be; but Scotty was invariably attentive to her. Passing to get a drink he would stop to ask about her rheumatism or about her son. We never knew she had rheumatism or a son until we learned of both through him. The son, it seemed, had turned out badly and was in a San Francisco hospital. And then he would buy of her things he did not want and advise her as to what was good for rheumatism and tell her to cheer up, she had plenty of good friends, and drop a quarter, maybe, into an apple basket. Similarly he interested himself in a business office clerk that had weak

lungs, and would tell him how to make herb tea and poultices for his chest, and caution him solemnly against drink and late hours and bad company. And perhaps that night one of us must needs intercede to get this sage counselor out of the police station. When he was sober he could discourse in choice and polished diction and when drunk he swore like a steamboat mate. I had reason to believe from some of his remarks that, emulating Jim Bludsoe, he had one wife in Memphis and another in Cincinnati and he was afraid to go near either. Altogether a sorry hero, I fear; and so much liked among us that annually his departure left the composing room for a day or two visibly depressed. Like the rest of his order he invariably fared upon his way penniless and the worse for his habits; and also like the rest he looked with unconcealed disfavor upon everything outside of New York. I cannot remember, by the bye, that I ever knew him or any of the others to laugh or be moved to any mirth; doubtless being philosophers and old travelers they were above such weakness.

If he had been without other sign of honor in our office, that he was allowed an individual slug with his name cast upon it would speak sufficiently of distinction; for while our establishment was small we had pride in the thought that it was rigidly regular. To those whose pitiable ways of life have never included education in a printing office I concede here the explanation that the kind of slug I refer to is merely the cast number that a compositor places at the head of the type he has set to identify his product. Beginning at the far end of the room, the first compositor used "Slug One," and thus in sequence to the door. Within the hours of composition even the best known among us was seldom summoned by his name, nor otherwise than by the number of the slug he used. Thus at

intervals the silence of the place would be pierced by the foreman's shrill cry:

"Who's setting on Slug Eight? Well, he wants to come here and close up his matter on the bank." Or

"Slug Five! Put a three-em dash after that take you got."

Or belike, one moved to jocoserie would declaim:

"What gentleman is composing this evening under Slug Ten? Will he oblige by performing his duties on these market corrections?"

In no such level of anonymity moved Scotty. Promptly upon his vernal appearance the galley boy from their winter retreat brought out the slugs marked "Scotty"; promptly upon the autumnal flitting the galley boy put them away.

This galley boy, incidentally, was a child of evil for whom I confidently predicted a career of crime ending upon the gallows and who seemed bent upon making his ancient title of printer's devil not merely appropriate but necessary. I saw him two years ago in a Western city, "a sober man among his boys," and was somewhat astonished to find that in his case also prophecy had been but vain. In the days of his apprenticeship he sought to improve the historical reputation of Herod and Pharaoh by a series of pranks and practical jests that strained even the phenomenal patience of my father. On one occasion from sheer mischief he mislaid for a precious hour part of a great speech by Roscoe Conkling, then coming by wire; and on another, when in the press room the old Cottrell and Babcock was pounding away at full tilt on the edition, he threw the mailing clerk's paste brush in the air to see if he could make it alight upon the shafting. It fell upon the bed of the press, landed on the chief local story, slid under the big cylinder, ruined half a column of good type, and spoiled a

piece of writing that was the pride of the city editor's young heart; I being the city editor. But even this son of Belial had nothing but respect for Scotty.

In one way he was worth it all, for as a craftsman he was a master hand. He was not only fast, which was not in our shop so phenomenal, for Tom Dermoody of our regular force had won a prize in a famous speed contest, but he was accurate and able. He could set tabular matter so that it would infallibly justify, and he could set advertisements in a way to delight the heart of any artist. Once he lingered among us until election time, which was an unusual benefaction on his part. Our election tables, showing how many votes had been cast for each candidate from governor to constable, were the mechanical glory of the office. Our custom was to set them in advance, with leaders or blanks in the places of the figures, these to be supplied on receipt of the returns on the night of the election. When this arrangement, sanctified by an ancient convention, was explained to Scotty he regarded it but lightly.

"You leave this to me," he said. On election night he called off Gus Brooks, one of our local talent, and the two, dividing the work under Scotty's direction, produced a marvel of a table that Scotty put into the forms with his own hands, absolutely perfect.

After which he stood at the stone until daylight, jeffing for dupes.*

He was the perfect type of his class, able, irresponsible, eager to get money, and unable to keep any of it.

"Earnestly he sogers over this and that,
All the time his eye is peeled on the hook for phat."

* Duplicate proofs of the matter set up, showing what each compositor had set. As the compositors were paid on these they were the equivalent of money.

And to think that now there is no phat, no copy hook worth talking about, no strings, no bursts of speed, no achievements like those of Old Bill Lindsay, the copy cutter of the New York *Herald,* who in the late rush moments would cut a column story into takes of two lines each! No more picturesque lying about the string I set the last week I had the markets on the Dubuque *Times,* no more musty old composing rooms, redolent of tobacco and ancient pipes! A printer turned mechanic and setting type by playing on keys like a typewriter, the composing room lined with great clinking, clattering machines, the days of artistry and romance so far gone that they are already legendary! Alas, the changes! Where in such times would a Scotty fit, came he back to life?

As with his fellows, when this philosopher talked the topic he most did love it was always New York, whereto I was a rapt and joyous listener. The night being done, the work over, the old single cylinder thundering away in the press room, the morning visible through dirty window panes, he would come into my room and sit, sometimes silent, sometimes moved to long flights of descriptive eloquence about his favorite city. He would tip back in his chair, his feet sociably resting on my flat-topped desk, his short stout legs crossed in comfort, a corn-cob pipe protruding from the grizzled stubble of his round face, a glass of beer within reach, and thus at ease his talk would run on for hours. Toward the ordinary topics of commonplace men he maintained a blasé indifference, declining to descend to turgid levels; but when he spoke of New York his blue eyes lighted, his face for all its disfigurements revealed a genuine animation. For the newspaper business as conducted elsewhere than in the metropolis he entertained only contempt; all editors except New York editors

were (to use a liberal translation) persons of quite inferior intellect and no consideration. In New York alone was the true art known and practiced.

"Did you ever see a good head line written outside of New York?" he would say. "Now tell me, did you? Well, neither did anybody else. And look at the way they dish up their stuff there; it isn't newspaper writing, it's literature. Read that now; isn't that literature? Well, I told you. Now that stuff is all written by artists, by the best writers in the world. Boston? Boston is nothing to New York; it isn't Hoboken, it isn't Rahway compared to New York. In Boston they're a lot of shoemakers."

Then he would fall to long dissertations on the size and grandeur of New York, on its strange corners and remote by-ways, the curiosities of the Bowery, the mysterious under side of New York life, the perilous regions, old Five Points, Hell's Kitchen, Cherry Hill and the docks, the forests of ship's masts, "and Spanish sailors with bearded lips" and all the witchery of the water front. And then he would tell of the life of a reporter in New York, its hazards and its chances for glory and profit, and dilate upon notable feats of reporting; for in that extraordinary mind he had stored incident upon incident until he seemed a mine of illustrative lore. He had happened, in some way I cannot now recall, to be connected with a phase of the New York *Sun's* handling of the famous Nathan murder, and he produced from his memory a luminous story of that grisly and historic crime. And from that he went into a recital of the notable and unsolved mysteries of New York, from the Burden shooting to the "car hook" murder, the weird places in which some of these had occurred, the strange case of Charley Ross, of which he had made a study, until the broad sunlight streamed in

the streets and the day gang came and found us still there.

This soiled and sorry ragamuffin whose ordinary conversation was more interesting than most novels, and whose morals were said on eminent authority to be utterly deplorable, had so often in his travels escaped violent death that he was convinced of a destiny to die of disease and was far more fearful of drinking contaminated water than of riding on car trucks. Once as he clung to the bumpers of a freight car a mad or intoxicated brakeman had fired five revolver shots at him and every shot had clipped or gone through Scotty's hat. Whereupon the brakeman, probably convinced that he had seen a ghost, leaped from the train and was killed. Several times Scotty had been in train wrecks. Once the car was on fire and he was pinned down by a pile of joist, but two brakemen worked with frenzied zeal until they freed him and saved his life; and then pursued him down the track pelting him with coal for stealing a ride. His walking experiment was made in the summer of 1874 when business was depressed and the country was full of tramps. He joined a colony of these and lived with them in a camp on the Wabash River, near Logansport, if my memory serves me right. He said there were six in the party and so great was the terror they inspired that the farmers used to come every morning with presents of milk and chickens and bread; but as a matter of fact the tramps were the most harmless of men and had barely courage to steal watermelons and green corn even at night. One had been a clergyman and used to reprove the others for swearing.

His stars deceived Scotty, poor man. What we had warned him of and he had scoffed at came to pass. It was down in southeastern Iowa one wet night. Perhaps he lost

his clutch upon the truck or perhaps mercifully he was asleep; but they found him dead on the tracks the next morning. We could better have spared a better man. A meeting was called in our office and we passed a resolution of regret that was more sincere if less formal than some other similar expressions I have known, and it was characteristic of printers that instantly a sum was subscribed to provide decent burial. One of the younger men went to the place to represent us. He had funds enough to buy a lot in a cemetery and even a head board and a floral wreath, and so the restless spirit came at last to rest. His memory is green with me; I doubt not it is with others; and if this scanty tribute be tardy it is paid with gratitude, for it was he that filled days and nights with unrestful visions of the outside world and the outlines of reporting as an art.

II

THE CASE OF WILLIAM HEILWAGNER

HAVING gained from my peripatetic friend and from other sources the impression that the true glory of newspaper work lay in the unraveling of murder mysteries, and that every reporter should endeavor to be a kind of M. Lecocq, I yearned to put into practice the lore I had gathered concerning these occult matters. I was deeply gratified when some shifting of the force in my father's office gave me for a time an opportunity to fill the position of city editor, and therefore to be close to any good, baffling mysteries, should such arise. And here a series of misadventures brought me to disaster in a way that still oppresses me, as regularly as I think of them, with something beyond humiliation, a fact that will be clearer to you when I have recited the record.

The first of my troubles befell me before I had been two weeks in my new position. I should digress here to explain that the city editor of my father's paper was also the staff of reporters, the market editor, and the dramatic critic. He was obliged, in the professional phrase, to cover, with one assistant, everything that happened in a city of twenty-five thousand inhabitants, a fact that gave him, I can assure you, but little opportunity for leisure and general conversation. The greater part of his labor consisted of scurrying from one possible source of news to another in the hope, often but vain, of securing the elusive

item. He had an average of five long columns to fill and on dull days the task, to an unimaginative man, was overwhelming. If he could get nothing to reprint he was often driven back upon sheer and perhaps clumsy invention. Once, I recall, in the midst of a very dull summer, our one railroad issued a new time-table, with very slight changes, and a grateful city editor reprinted from the back of it the "Rules and Regulations for Employees" that had been made when the railroad was built. And often a clipping from a far away exchange with names and places deftly shifted has saved an otherwise desperate situation.

In a side street near the river was a certain old junk shop that maintained (without deserving) a grizzled little proprietor of the name of Needham, if I have it right. I knew him by sight as I knew most of the dwellers of the town wherein I had been born and reared, but not being aware that he had knowledge of me was surprised one day to be hailed by him as I sped along intent upon the five columns and the task of filling them. Astonishment took on the tinge of pleasure when he drew me into his wretched old place, filled with ancient chandlery and scrap iron, and whispering that he had an item for me, cocked his head and stood off to relish the result of that communication.

"See that safe?" he said, pointing to a rusty old iron box on the floor. "Do you know what that is? Of course you don't. My boy, that is the safe of the Effie Afton."

"Well," I said, "the Effie Afton. And what is the Effie Afton?"

He made a signal of despair. "What is the Effie Afton? You mean what was the Effie Afton. But I forgot how young you are. The Effie Afton, my son, was the finest steamer that ever sailed on the Mississippi River. And

she was lost—lost before my eyes. Not one hundred feet from where we are now, I stood and saw her cast off, saw her signal for the bridge, saw her strike the bridge and sink—twenty years ago. The terrible disaster of the Effie Afton; one hundred lives lost; you must have heard of it."

"How do you know this is the safe of the Effie Afton?"

"How do I know? My boy, I helped to build that boat. I put this safe into her purser's office. I know it well. And this morning, when they brought it to me, I just sat down and cried. They were fishermen that had been running a trot line, and one of their anchors caught in the handle, and they got help and raised it, and here it is. I stood on the shore and watched her sail away; dear old Hank Davison was her captain, my dearest friend on earth; I saw him on the upper deck when she left the shore and waved good-by to him and a few minutes later he was dead," and the old man's eyes filled with tears.

Here was manna in the wilderness. It was always admissible and an admired feat to recall an event that happened years ago if you could find something upon which to hang the reminiscence, and the peg here provided was all that the most exacting could require. The safe of the Effie Afton returned in this startling way to the very man that put it into position years before—a coincidence made to order could not be more perfectly adapted to my needs.

I had yet to learn one of the reporter's first and most useful lessons, which is that there are some things that do not happen. To my confusion and disgust it was the foreman of the office, a person with whom I had an ancient feud, that undeceived me. I had written about two columns of a high order of literature concerning the historic disaster to the Effie Afton when the low-browed foreman entered with the proofs and saved the paper and me from

a position wherein we should have been the laughing stock of the state. He happened to notice the story on the galleys and did a Christian deed of rescue for a wholly unchristian motive, which was, in his own detestable phrase, "to have one on the kid city editor." The safe had lain for years in a back alley and had never been nearer to the Effie Afton than I had been. George Davenport's family had long used it as a receptacle for kitchen slops.

So with varying fortunes went the battle against the five long columns, sometimes with joyful success as when a new steamboat appeared and one could write an unintelligible column about her engines: sometimes but sadly as when the day's harrowing produced nothing but barren "city briefs." Ours was a river town and occasionally the crew of a log raft would come ashore and get drunk of a dull night and make their names blessed among us by falling into the hands of the scanty police force; but as a rule the monotonous passing of steamers constituted our sole produce from that source. That "the Diamond Joe arrived from St. Louis and left for St. Paul," and "the Josephine arrived from St. Paul and left for St. Louis," did not seem of enthralling interest however we might turn such facts to and fro upon the spit of an urgent necessity. Between the closing of the schools in June and the beginning of the county fair in September a horrible lethargy seemed to fall upon the place. Nobody did anything except to eat and sleep, and however needful may be these exercises they furnish nothing for a hard-driven man with five columns to fill. The heat was usually great, the atmosphere soft and languid, and except for the few and much envied persons that were able to afford a trip to the seaside or to Oconomowoc and thereby furnish an attenuated paragraph, the city editor seemed without a

friend. After one had exhausted the personal items, the hotel arrivals, which were few and exclusively of traveling salesmen, and the records of births and deaths, there was nothing to fall back upon but the exchanges. Our population, being largely German, was domestic, orderly, and in a news sense, unprofitable. In the summer months it seemed to go to sleep, reversing what is, I believe, the practice of the bear and the Rocky Mountain goat.

It was now unseasonably aroused from its torpor by a murder mystery which while not exactly of the type I should have chosen was still puzzling enough. There lived on the outskirts of the town a poor peddler, well known to be a harmless person of good habits. He did not drink, he had no enemies, never had the courage to quarrel with anyone, and had no affairs with women. At dusk one evening he was driving homeward in his wagon, below the tail board of which hung a step. Someone must have gotten upon that, crept up behind him, and killed him, for he was found only a moment or two later with his head beaten in, still holding the reins. He had not been robbed, for his old brass watch and about two dollars in change were in his pockets.

I was fond of imagining myself to be Amos Cummings or Sam Smith or some other famous New York reporter of whom I had heard and of trying to think what my model would do in any given conditions. Both my imaginings and my theories now broke under me. Here was a mystery ready to my hand for the solving, and I did not know what to do with it. I could well believe that in the like situation a New York reporter would go unerringly to the secret, would start out with some inspiration and lay a hand upon the guilty one, but I did not know which way to begin. I looked at the scene and questioned the man's

family and neighbors and that is as far as I ever got. I knew that I ought to solve the mystery and to further the ends of justice but I never did, and so far as I know the crime still remains without explanation. It happened in a thickly inhabited street, with two hundred people within call, and nobody ever knew why it happened nor who did it.

The other instance of my incapacity was of a far more serious nature. On the other side of the Mississippi about eleven miles above our town dwelt in a lonely spot by the riverside three German market gardeners named Heilwagner. Two were extremely uninteresting persons. William, the father, was short, thick-set, dull, slow of speech, and unprepossessing of aspect. When he appeared in the streets of the near-by town, the children used to laugh at the fringe of frowsy beard under his chin, his ill-fitting and greasy attire, and his shambling, plowman's gait. Otto, his son, was much of a piece with him and whatever of vivacity there might have been in that dull household centered about the third member, Otto's wife, who was a dark, lithe, and handsome young animal.

By all accounts she was fond of amusement, and life on an onion farm, with its back-breaking and monotonous labor, must have been deadly to her. To make matters worse she had been a chambermaid in a city hotel and the taste for the vanities of town life was strong upon her. But the father and son were plodders and of the country, even in Bavaria where they had been born and whence they came, heaven knows under what delusion of wealth or opportunity in the new world, to settle at last into this forlorn spot. The woman was headstrong and light-hearted; the old man was religious in a dull, and probably sour way; and the amusements of his daughter-in-law gave

him continual offense. At every opportunity she was away to dances in the country towns; when the old man reproved her, she resented with insult his intrusion into her affairs; and as Otto sided sometimes with his father and sometimes with his wife the jangling was notorious and, in the opinion of the neighbors, must have been incessant. It appeared also that scandal was sometimes rife about the young woman; and it was altogether a wretched home.

About the middle of the summer, when the onions had been well weeded and the stress of work was relaxed, Otto found employment across the river and left home. For a time the old man and the young woman were the sole tenants of the place. Then the young woman disappeared and the old man lived on alone.

The nearest neighbor, noting this, asked William what had become of his daughter-in-law. When he answered simply that he did not know, talk and surmise began to go about the countryside. A man was found who when driving past the Heilwagner house late one night, had heard faint cries and sobbing. William lived on unperturbed. Some of the good people, remembering the violent quarrels of that household, carried the matter to official notice. A constable came and questioned William, who worked steadily in the onion field and knew nothing. With the constable a little crowd of farmers had gathered. It was proposed that the premises should be searched. The house and the barn were turned inside out. Except for the fact that all the woman's little possessions seemed to be in her room and undisturbed nothing was discovered. Then one of the neighbors said that the pile of firewood by the barn seemed to him to be in a different position from that in which he had been accustomed to see it. At the word the crowd seized the firewood and began to pitch it into a corner,

and at the bottom they found the body of Otto's wife. She had been beaten to death over the head.

"What do you know about this?" said the crowd grimly to the old man. He stared at the corpse unshaken and merely repeated that he knew nothing. "Ich weiss nichts," he said and folded his hands. There was a suggestion of lynching, but wise men pointed out that perhaps the old man might be innocent. How about Otto? they said. So the constable took William to the county jail at Rock Island and locked him up.

How was it, then, about Otto? He was readily found and as readily established his innocence. He lived at a boarding house in the village directly across the river. On the night when the neighbor heard the cries and sobbing, as on every other night for weeks, Otto was in the boarding house; the boarders all said so. They saw him and played pinochle with him and saw him go to bed.

All this seemed perfectly plain and yet the behavior of the old man struck some of us as odd and unsatisfactory. At the preliminary examination, as subsequently at the trial, he made no attempt to defend himself, answering questions in monosyllables and volunteering nothing. He had an odd habit of sitting forward in his chair, his legs crossed, his hands clasped around the knee that was uppermost, while he swung one foot slowly to and fro, and studied the floor. At such times he seemed unaware of what was going on about him, and to be with clenched lips lost in some bitter meditation. Something about him seemed infinitely pathetic and wholly incongruous with the idea that he was a cruel and red-handed murderer, and when I learned that he had given his attorney no assistance and no information except to declare many times that he was not guilty, I had an inspiration to see if by the practice

of this detective art of which I had heard so much I could bring a clearer light upon the case.

The scene of the crime, being revisited, showed nothing; the neighbors could add no more details to their previous stories; Otto's fellow-boarders gave him a perfect alibi. By the process of exclusion there seemed no one in the least likely to do the murder except the old man, and to him I went at last in the county jail.

He sat in his cell, nursing his knee, his eyes upon a little square of light that fell upon the floor. I was conscious of the embarrassment of youth and inexperience and something more. It struck me of a sudden that here we all were, prosecuting officers, police, press, court, judge, and all society, fiercely pursuing this one little man who seemed so defenseless and pitiable like a rabbit before the hounds. Before that I had looked at the case with professional impartiality. Now I began to hope earnestly that something might develop in the old man's favor.

He turned upon me his mild, dull eyes and acknowledged my greeting.

"Mr. Heilwagner," I said rather lamely, "there are persons in this community who do not believe you are guilty, and if you will give me a full statement of your case I think it will be for your advantage."

"Oh, yes," said the old man indifferently. "Oh, yes, I think so, I think so," and relapsed into his former attitude. I was rather astonished to find that he seemed perfectly to understand English, while he spoke it readily and without much accent.

"Well, now," said I, much encouraged, "tell me about it. Where were you on the night when your daughter-in-law was killed?"

"Who? Me?"

"Yes, you. Where were you?"

"Oh, I was in the house."

"Well, did you see her get killed?"

"Who? Me? No, I didn't see her get killed."

"Did you hear her cry out?"

"Who? Me?"

"Yes, you. Did you hear her cry out?"

"No, I didn't hear nothing."

"Did she go to bed as usual that night?"

"Who? Annie? Oh, yes, I guess. She go to bed all right."

"Did you hear her get up in the night? Did you hear anybody come to the house? Did you hear any talking or fighting?"

"Who? Me?"

"Yes, you."

"No, I didn't hear nothing."

"Well, you knew that she went to bed that night and she wasn't there the next morning and she never came back. Didn't you think that was strange?"

"Didn't I think what was strange?"

"That she had gone away in the night and never come back. Didn't you think that was strange?"

"Who? Me? No, I didn't think nothing about it. I just go weed my onions."

And so went the conversation minute after minute until my allotted time had expired. It did not seem in nature that the man should be so dull and yet I could make nothing of him. I could not even say with certainty that he had a sense of the deadly peril he was in, and yet something told me that he had and knew all much better than I.

Able counsel had been assigned by the court and did all that could be done, but the case was so clear that the

process of justice could not be long delayed. The murder was committed in August. A Friday at the end of March was appointed for the execution. Meantime the old man in the jail underwent no visible change in the approaching shadow of the gallows. Lutheran clergymen attended faithfully upon him and he joined in their ministrations; at other times he sat there in his cell with his legs crossed and studied the light upon the floor. But on the night before his last day of life he grew restless.

"Do you want anything?" said the warden kindly.

"Get Otto. I want to see Otto," said the old man.

So they brought Otto to the cell door, for in those last hours no closer access was allowed to the man condemned. He put his hands through the grating of the door and took Otto's head between them and kissed his forehead twice, making some strange guttural noise. Then he sat down again and looked where the square of light had been but was no longer, because of the night.

On the last day the sun shone clear, and a sharp wind blew through the narrow courtyard of the jail. A little past noon, the old man, led by the guards, shambled forth upon the scaffold. I saw him look up at the sky and the flying clouds and all around, at the sunshine in the court and the sparrows in the eaves, and at last he looked down into the faces of the little knot of newspaper reporters and sheriff's officers that had come to see him die. Then he said, in a voice singularly clear, resonant, and steady:

"Gentlemen—I am innocent of this crime."

The sheriff, who, I remember, was trembling and crying, did his part of the dreadful work and so ended the life of this condemned murderer.

"Gentlemen, I am innocent of this crime." Not one of us that heard believed him. What guilty man is ever

punished? What murderer, however hardened, or however certain his crime, fails to protest on the gallows in the like terms and with the same hardihood? All the experienced reporters there told me they had heard such assertions often on the like occasion and were moved not a whit.

And yet that dull old man was telling but the literal truth. Almost ten years after that day a man committed suicide by jumping from the bridge at Quincy, Illinois. He left a written statement that was an explicit confession of the murder of Annie Heilwagner. It was Otto. He had been living, he said, at the boarding house in the town on the other side of the river. Late at night he had dropped out of his window, taken a skiff, and rowed across the stream. At the Heilwagner house he tapped at Annie's window and whispered to her to come out, and when she came out he had killed her. Then he had hidden the body under the woodpile, rowed back to his boarding house, and nobody the wiser. He had made up his mind to kill her when he found that she had been unfaithful to him. And he had allowed his father to be hanged an innocent man.

"Who? Me?" the old man had said, in answer to my questions. He knew it all, he knew who killed Annie, and he went calmly to his death to save his guilty son. Dull old man, chill and repulsive, he had in him so much of the hero and so much of love. "For greater love hath no man than this."

It was a rugged introduction for a novice to the business of crime detecting and legalized life-taking. If I had been expert at my trade I might have saved that man. *Post facto* illumination—how foolish it is! I can see now the indications and signs and hints that meant nothing to me then. But even though I knew at the time nothing of the full horror of that day the experience sickened me of hang-

ings. I have never since acquiesced in any capital punishment. It is as illogical as it is profitless. I have had in my time more than my share of these spectacles, and I take it as a fact worthy of serious reflection that I have seen the state put to death eleven persons and five of these I know to have been absolutely innocent, while of the guilt of a sixth and the mental responsibility of a seventh there were the gravest doubts. Murder upon murder, and if I should be asked what good or advantage society reaped from the death of any or all of these, I should be unable to say, nor has there yet appeared in my range of experience any person more expert than I to make that answer.

III

THE MAN OUT OF WORK

So here we were at last, the two of us, catapulted, so to speak, into the great city, the place that if I were in the way of romance I might call the city of my dreams. To begin the career metropolitan in pursuit of success and fame we were possessed of thirty-seven dollars between us, some vague and chiefly erroneous information about the world we were to conquer, and a naïve confidence that appears to me now not less than beautiful. For my own part I knew so little of New York that when we walked down to the Battery the first day I took Governor's Island to be Blackwell's; and desiring to go to Brooklyn Bridge took a street-car that landed me at the West Twenty-third Street ferry. But most difficulties seem slight to youth.

What was more important than our ignorance of the city was our unfamiliarity with the actual methods of New York newspapers. Both of us had held in the West positions of some distinction. I had been successively the managing editor of three daily newspapers that I deemed to be important; I knew well enough how these were made and every stage of the process, and I never imagined that the fame of the Detroit *Tribune* had not penetrated to Park Row, nor that the methods of Detroit could differ essentially from the methods of New York. Newspaper making is newspaper making; well, here am I, a skilled practitioner of the art; bring on your newspaper and I will show you how to make it.

The first slight disarrangement of our pleasant dream came early in the engagement; the first day, if I remember. It was, in fact, a rather alarming discovery about our funds. With amazing rapidity these melted away, we could hardly tell how. A dollar in New York hardly seemed to last so long as a quarter lasted in Detroit. We arrived in the morning and took a cab to the hotel, that being the better form in men come to conquer the metropolis, and were astounded when the cabman demanded a dollar and a half each for driving us about a mile. At the hotel we sat down to what we designed should be a modest breakfast and the prices on the bill of fare counseled us to serious thought. This had been commended to us as a cheap hotel; what on earth must the others be? Obviously we could not long delay our first assault upon the newspaper ramparts, otherwise we should quickly arrive at an awkward state in our finances. To-morrow, no later, we shall begin the campaign. To-day let us look at the great city.

I had been vaguely conscious from the time of my arrival that the people around me were different from the good folks of the West. No one seemed to look at nor care for anybody else, but all were rushing frantically and self-absorbed upon some indiscernible goal. Everybody with whom I came in contact seemed to take pains to be disagreeable, and that was not at all the way with us in the West. The clerk and porter at the hotel had been sour and curt; the ticket chopper on the elevated railroad cursed me because I didn't know that the ticket was to be deposited in the chopping box; the guard only laughed evilly when I asked what was the next station after Twenty-third Street. In a curious way these repeated observations seemed to shake me internally until in a strange new confused world of men I was losing

all familiar anchorage. In the afternoon we went by the bridge to Brooklyn. The car had started and I was gazing intently at the panorama of the East River and the dense forest of masts that in those days stretched along South Street when I was aware of someone striking me on the knee. Turning swiftly around in my seat I found myself confronting a middle-aged man, very well dressed, glaring at me with what seemed to be demoniacal hatred. In a cold, harsh, rasping voice he was crying, "Move over there, you! Move over!" and I saw that he wished me to move so that with greater comfort he could sit, though there was room enough. I obeyed in some confusion, and took an early opportunity to study the face of this person, who at once upon sitting down plunged into the reading of a newspaper, oblivious to everybody in the car. There was something about his face so hard, so cruel, so arrogant, and so brutal that never having seen the like I wondered at it. He had rather a full and sensual face, the gray mustache was short and carefully trimmed, every article in his attire was faultless and modish. Long afterward I discovered that the man was a famous Wall Street broker, a leader among the bears, and a perfect type of his class. At the time being I could but marvel at his bearing, his obvious disregard of every human being except himself, and that strange expression of cold cruelty. Presently I looked from him to the others in the car, and thought I saw that look reflected (in a less degree) upon every face in sight. "This New York is a cruel place," I concluded and a chill went over me.

We had arrived on the 17th of June at the beginning of the hottest and dullest summer that New York had known in several years. If we had been other than blind

fools plunging into a game of which we knew nothing we should have understood that the summer is the worst possible time to seek work in New York and that the problem then before every city editor is how to reduce his staff, not increase it. Of this we knew nothing. Newspapers were made every day; many men were required to make them; when it came to making newspapers we were as good as the best. What more was necessary?

In this frame of mind (more or less) we sallied forth on the morning. Within the first two hours we had successfully mastered the amazing fact that in New York City you cannot see a city editor. The first office that we approached with the intention of offering our valued services was the New York *Herald,* then published at Broadway and Ann Street, opposite old St. Paul's. We climbed the three long flights of iron stairs to the city department and came face to face with a board partition, an iron gate apparently locked, and a push button with a small sign above it, reading " Ring."

So we rang and after a time there appeared a youth that regarded us with manifest contempt and then said, out of one side of his mouth, " Well, whadda youse want? " We said we wished to see the city editor. With his left hand he flung at us a small card thus worded:

Mr. ————————
wishes to see the City Editor
about ————————
————————, 188—.

With which he vanished. One of us filled out the blank as best he could, stating that we were experienced newspaper men and had called to mention to the city editor our

willingness to accept positions with the *Herald* if sufficient inducements were offered. This, the youth having returned, we intrusted to his care. After a long interval he reappeared and this was his remark:

"Hey, youse! City editor says he regrets t' say there's no vacancy on the *Herald* staff."

Whereupon he disappeared.

Assuredly this was not a promising beginning. Yet we hoped for better things elsewhere, and not discouraged we tramped down the iron stairs and turned toward the next office. If we could talk with the city editor we should certainly win, for then we could explain fully about our qualifications and the important work we had done. But as long as he would not see us, of course, after all, the loss was his.

The next point of attack was, I think, the *World*. There was an elevator in the *World* office, which we took to be a good sign, but when we were emitted from it on the top floor, we found our way barred by two youths instead of one, and these no less ready with the blank to be filled out, which was duly returned to us with the same comment we had heard in the *Herald* office. This began to look serious. It seemed still more serious when in the classic phraseology to which we were growing accustomed, we had been "chased" successively from the offices of the *Sun*, the *Times*, and the *Tribune*. The identity of our experiences began to impress itself even upon our dull minds. Evidently, then, it was the practice of city editors not to see applicants for positions. We could hardly grasp the fact, yet it seemed quite true. We had pictured ourselves walking up to the city editor's desk, sitting down with him in cordial discourse, and impressing him with the advantages that we offered. Instead of which the only

persons we impressed were some extremely uncouth boys upon whom the impression so far had been one of scornful amusement. How on earth, then, did one secure a position in New York? And how on earth did the city editors do business? The day closed with a rebuff at the last of the morning newspaper offices; until the morrow nothing could be done with the evening journals; and we went back to the hotel in thoughtful mood.

One thing at least was clear. We must reduce our expenses. At the rate we were then living a few more days would see us stranded. We scanned the advertisements of rooms to let, picked out one in the remote regions of Brooklyn on no other ground than that it was cheap, and the next morning having paid our bill (with inward groans) we moved our one trunk to the Brooklyn address and took possession of our room. It was in the rear, it was small, barren, and hot; its windows commanded only an expanse of untidy back yards, and I confess I looked at it with sharp dismay. However, there we were, and having paid a week's room rent in advance, we returned to the siege.

In this unfruitful pursuit we now passed day upon day until we had been turned away from every daily newspaper office in the city and from the offices of several weeklies. More than once we went the rounds but the result was invariable. The evening papers were conducted, we soon found, in the same way as the morning papers; the applicant could not break away into the city editor's presence, but always the grinning office boy, whom we came to hate as well as to dread, returned the one stereotyped refusal. They seemed to be a species of human parrot, those boys; they had learned, apparently from a common source, but two phrases of man's speech. One

was "Well, whadda youse want?" and the other "City editor says no vacancy on the staff."

At the time this seemed to me a most intolerable injustice and piece of snobbery that, knowing nothing of the reasons for it, I was never weary of denouncing. I hope I shall not appear more variable than the average man when I admit that when I became city editor I followed exactly the same practice without the least thought of the days when I was a humble and an unsuccessful applicant for an audience. But in these tangled currents the point of view is easily shifted. I must fear, too, that perhaps I was, on the whole, rather less accessible than some of the men that I had once denounced. This was doubtless inconsistent with my professions, but it was quite consistent with what I have been able to observe of human nature.

We did succeed in getting a sight of one of the remote and sacred city editorial tribe. It was at the office of the old *Commercial Advertiser,* then published from a frightful barrack at the corner of Fulton and Nassau Streets. With reason I use the phrase; the old shell burned down afterward and killed five or six persons. It was at the close of the day's work when we called (for the third time, I think) at this dismal den. The city editor must have had a good day, or perhaps he was just going home. At least he came out, and proved to be no dragon but very much like other men, only somehow curter of speech and warier of manner, as if he deemed everyone he met to be intent upon some device of evil. He was good enough to explain that in the summer work was slack and he always let men go. But (looking us over with a glance that seemed to take in every detail), we might come back in the fall: perhaps there would be a chance then.

By this time our money was all spent, we were in arrears of rent for our room, and the few coins by which we obtained food and street-car fares were secured from the pawn-shops. One by one we pawned every article of value about us and then began on such wearing apparel as we could for the time dispense with. Meanwhile we labored with assiduity to earn something with our pens. Looking back now impartially I cannot really think that we failed in any way to deserve success; we practiced all the virtues. Night after night we sat in our hot rear room, under a blazing gas jet, writing sketches, stories, poems, Sunday specials, paragraphs, and (with humiliation I own it!) even puns. The days were spent in peddling these and in search for that evanescent job. Most of our literary efforts were flung back upon our hands. In a fit of cynical desperation we had begun to cover our walls with the printed forms wherewith the editors notified us of the rejection of our manuscripts. It proved but sorry sport, the accumulation before long becoming too appalling to be funny. Sometimes we sold a little Sunday article or a Saturday special for an evening paper and got a few dollars, and we were always on the lookout for news that we could sell. I remember once a chance remark that my companion heard on a street-car turned out to be a news item for which the *Sun* paid a dollar and a half.

I had often heard about men that were said to be "out of work," but until this experience I had never sensed any part of the true meaning of the phrase. Many another phrase that passes idly from lip to lip has with it horrors of meaning similarly unknown to the uninitiated; for nothing teaches life but life. In a vague way I had gathered that to be "out of work" was deemed a misfortune, but only experience could instruct me in its grim realities.

The awakening in the morning from happy unconsciousness to the sickening sense of another day of anxieties; the revolt of the bruised mind against the unavoidable trial at hand; the struggle to gather courage; the wild, hysterical longing to come by the peace and content of other days; the dreary start upon the search; the hesitation and dread before each door; the application made with a miserable pretense of easy confidence; the curt refusal; the shamed exit from the gaze of happier men that have the precious boon of work; and the home-coming at night, tired and defeated and ill-fed and struggling with black despair; I declare to you that no man may know what all this is until he has passed through it, nor having learned thus of it may in any words speak adequately of its terrors. Since that season of humiliation and pain I have never been able to so much as hear the phrase "out of work" without a suggestion of the old sinking at the heart, the feeling of defeat and isolation, as if I were again coming from a day of rebuffs and reversals to the hot atmosphere of that rear room in East New York. For all the years that have passed the physical feeling still returns upon me, a fact from which you may gauge the bitterness of the original experience.

The sense of isolation was a stinging part of the sufferings laid upon me. To walk idle in the midst of throngs so vast and so busy marked me as a being apart and uncanny. Other men had work and a rational share in the world's activities. I alone could win no place therein. I know not how I can convey to you the horrible feeling that weighed upon me at the thought. I was not only alone but I must be peculiar or lacking in what all other men possessed. In after years there came across my attention scores of cases where men out of work had ended their

lives, and recalling (with an inward shudder) what I myself had endured, I could understand perfectly why they had given up in despair.

To my other sufferings was added an accursed habit of introspection that now returned upon and came near to undoing me. Every man has, I suppose, lingering somewhere in his mind a latent conviction that he is a failure and a dullard. However much in ordinary seasons vanity may be able to silence this grewsome intruder, I believe it comes forth whenever the world goes awry. Upon me it now descended at times with irresistible force. New York afforded the indisputable test; New York had found me out; in my complacent vanity I had thrust myself into the very community too wise to be deceived, and deservedly I had been branded with the one word in the language that burns the deepest. I was a failure.

Yet, even this harsh and acrid adversity had its sweet use of tuition. I began to suspect for the first time the sanity of the arrangement that compelled men to ask in vain for work. I saw that in spite of the enforced idleness about me, the world had no end of work that ought to be done, and I laid hold of the fundamental truth that work ought not to be a privilege, or a boon; work is a right; men are as much entitled to it as to air and light; without it can be no physical, mental, nor moral health; and the spectacle of the endless stream of idle men with whom I was driven now to associate in coffee houses and at free luncheon bars seemed to me a black indictment of society. Why lay the needless curse of compulsory idleness upon the needless curse of compulsory poverty?

I wrote a letter once a week for the Detroit Sunday *Tribune,* for which I was to be paid at the munificent rate of three dollars each. The payments were long overdue and

yet so nervous and fearful had we become that I did not dare to write in complaint lest I should lose this slender raft of hope. For the sake of appearances I had an address in New York and I awoke one morning in our poor little Brooklyn room with an innate conviction that my check had arrived. We had between us just twelve cents, which would enable us to reach New York (by elevated railroad and ferry) provided we were expeditious and arrived at the ferry house before nine o'clock, after which hour the fare was two cents instead of one. If the check should not be there, we had no way of returning to Brooklyn, for in those days the promenade on the bridge was not free. Nevertheless we took the chance, made our way to New York, and found the check all right. The next problem was how to get the money on it. Nelson, my fellow-sufferer, agreed to wait at the corner of Fulton and South Streets while I made my way to the bank on which the check was drawn, situated at the very foot of Broadway. With extreme trepidation in view of what was involved, I presented the check at the paying teller's window. The doors had just been opened and I was the only customer in sight. The teller picked up the check, flipped it over, and flipped it back to me.

"Don't know you, Mr. Russell," he said, and waved me aside.

"I know you don't," I said, making a desperate attempt to be jocular, "but you ought to. I'm a good fellow to know."

Strange to say, he seemed to thaw a little at this, for the shadow of a smile hovered about his mouth. He said:

"You will have to get someone that we know to identify you."

"My dear sir," I said, "I don't know a soul in New

York, but I have here some letters that may satisfy you," and making this last chanceful play, I drew forth a package of papers.

"Nothing will do but an endorsement by someone we know," he said, but his eye ran over the envelopes nevertheless. Most of them were from Detroit.

"Do you live in Detroit?" he asked with a sudden access of interest.

"I did until a month ago," I said.

"Tell me about that nine they've got there this year," he said, leaning eagerly toward the window.

The man was a baseball fan! It happened that Detroit that year had secured players of phenomenal excellence and all the baseball world was eager to know about their performances. Baseball was the teller's one joy in life. I was myself an old player and as much in love with the game as he. I told him about the Detroit stars until the customers began to accumulate behind me.

"Give me that check," said the teller suddenly. "I'll take the chance. Here you are"—and he counted out the money.

I clutched it and ran. At Fulton and South Streets still waited poor Nelson, all but famished, for neither of us had had breakfast. We dashed into Sweet's restaurant near by and ordered ham and eggs and coffee, these being both cheap and filling.

It was by such narrow margins that we made our way. We owed for our room but the landlady, a good, sympathetic soul, gave us to know that we need not pay her until we found work. On such scraps of writing as we could sell we lived, sometimes eating that succulent dish known as "biff an'," * sometimes in rare moments of good

* Park Row vernacular for a plate of corned beef and beans.

fortune dining on a small steak at Sweet's. The cheap eating houses around Park Row were a haven of refuge. "Biff an'" cost but ten cents; three indigestible wads of dough known by the expressive name of "sinkers," cost but five. When one had partaken of these dainties he seldom craved for more within the next four or five hours. If his wealth included another five-cent piece and he drank on top a cup of paralyzing tea his hunger might be appeased for the better part of a day.

So the weeks dragged by without a change in the prospect, without a change in our situation except that it seemed to grow worse, until we began to be assailed with the conviction that the newspaper business in New York was closed against us. A venture as advertising solicitors brought upon our heads a failure both humiliating and ridiculous and came near to complete our discomfiture. It appeared that we were of an alien race and a hated, for we could approach no one on any subject without being snarled at, and in the end, repeated rebuffs, that seemed to us couched in terms malicious and brutal, broke our spirits.

In fact, we reached on this subject such a degree of nervousness that when with nickel in hand we approached a bartender for the glass of beer that convoyed the necessary free luncheon we were moved to propitiate him—not always without reason. The final blow came when I obtained from a St. Louis trade journal a commission (worth three dollars) to write a 3,000 word letter puffing its New York advertisers and these advertisers, being made aware of my errand, drove me from their presence with gratuitous abuse. After that it seemed that the laws of nature were reversed and the whole world was banded against us.

My companion now saw plainly that so far as the news-

paper business was concerned the game was up. In some way he learned that there was a vacancy in the Brooklyn post-office in the staff of emergency letter carriers. He applied for it and was busy at night preparing to take the necessary examination. I cherished in those days a favorite resort to which, when I was tired and unusually depressed, I went for rest and quiet. A short distance below Fulton ferry was a long open wharf at which tied up the great American sailing clippers that then plied around Cape Horn. On the string piece of this wharf at its outer edge I could always be alone and draw some diversion from the busy scenes about me. I remember sitting there one bright afternoon in August. We had now been in New York two months. We had achieved nothing but defeat and disaster; we had no money nor the means of making it; we were much in debt. Clearly we had made a huge blunder when we left the West, where we were among our own people; but without money how could we make our way West again? There flashed across me then a recollection of Scotty riding on trucks and bumpers and breaking into freight cars. I had but a slight idea of the way such things were done. "Other men have done them," I said, "and if I am a failure as a newspaper man, I may be a success as a tramp. I'll talk it over with Nelson."

There was loading at that wharf that day the great ship St. Francis; gangs of 'longshoremen were sweating at the task, the whole wharf resounding with their activities and the noise of two donkey engines. Up and down the river I could see other wharfs with other gangs of men similarly employed. Behind me the city roared with varied industry, trucks in unending procession hammered over the paving stones, crowds of eager-faced men pressed

along the sidewalks. The old heavy-weighted thought returned. Was it not strange that in the midst of this ceaseless and incalculable tumult of work, I should be apparently the one figure for whom there was no use? Men were wanted to load ships, to drive street-cars, to handle trucks. But I was not wanted for anything, I alone of so many thousands, and why was that? If other men had a place in this world of work, why had I none? It must be because the work that I desired to do had no relation to any legitimate need of mankind but was a thing extraneous and dispensable. Then my companion was right. Better to be a letter carrier, even an emergency letter carrier, and do something that society needed to have done than to write the most beautiful newspaper story that was ever embalmed in print. I had a trade; with a little practice I could become sufficiently expert in it; and I resolved to seek the next day some avenue of employment as a printer.

In this frame of mind I arose from the string piece much relieved and made my way briskly along Fulton Street toward Broadway. I had no definite idea whither I was going, but a mood of activity had succeeded to a mood of inertia. At the corner of Broadway I encountered almost the only newspaperman with whom I had been able to make acquaintance. He asked me if I had found a job yet.

"I haven't," I said, "and I have given up hope of one. I guess there are no more newspaper jobs—at least for me."

"Then here's your chance," says he. "I met the managing editor of the *Commercial Advertiser* to-day and he told me he wanted a man."

"Where is he?" I cried. "Where is this marvel? Let me see him before he gets away."

"He's gone home now, but you lay for him at his office the first thing to-morrow morning. Be early—there'll be a shoal of men after that job as soon as it is known."

Be early! I was up before daybreak; I was at the elevated railroad stairs before the trains had begun to run. When I arrived in front of the *Commercial Advertiser* office the janitor had not opened the building. I was waiting there when he came and began to sweep off the sidewalk, when the elevator man started the hoisting apparatus, when the fiendish office boy slouched up and unlocked the editorial department doors. I was sitting there in the anteroom when the city editor and his assistants arrived, when the reporters came in, when the bustle of the day awoke. I was there when the managing editor came and I seized him by the arm as he went by. Twenty minutes later, exultation struggling with self-distrust, I was in the city room, a member of the staff waiting for an assignment. I had found work at last.

IV

THE STREETS AND THE ISLAND, THE ISLAND AND THE STREETS

THE journal to which I had thus joined my humble fortunes was of a kind as extinct now as the dodo. It consisted of four pages of ten columns each, was printed directly from the type without stereotyping, and on a quaint, lumbering old press fondly and reasonably known as "the type founders' friend." The columns were of an inordinate length (in the expressive office phrase, "as long as from here to the Battery") and the whole appearance of the sheet was of a huge, unwieldy blanket presenting an illimitable desert of type, for there were no illustrations.

In those good days all reporters' work in New York was paid for at space rates. On the *Commercial Advertiser* the rate was four dollars and thirty-two cents a column. The reason for the thirty-two cents I was never able to fathom, but I have no doubt it had some reference to economy, which was the watchword of the management. Considering the length of the columns the pay could hardly be called princely. Many a gallant spirit has gone down in a brave but futile attempt to fill those columns, and you will not be astonished to learn that some men on the staff at the end of a week's toil found they had on their strings no more than five dollars.

There was, besides, a feature of the employment that in any other branch of industry would have produced revolt. On all the other newspapers of New York a time

allowance was part of the space system; that is to say, if a reporter were sent out upon an assignment and no space resulted for him he was entitled to charge by the hour for the time he had spent upon the work—usually at the rate of fifty cents an hour. On the *Commercial Advertiser* there was no time allowance; therefore a reporter might spend days in hard and conscientious labor and for no fault of his own receive not a cent for it all. Nay, he might be out of pocket a considerable sum; for in a city so long and narrow as New York very few assignments can be covered on foot, and in those days the elevated railroad fare was ten cents. Soon after I went to work on the paper a young man in the cashier's office stole a few dollars. The management was very indignant at this young man and insisted upon punishing him. But the management had no objection to stealing the labor of its employees many times every day.

Add to these untoward conditions the fact that the absence of a time allowance was to the city editor an almost irresistible temptation to send out men on precarious assignments that were merely long shots, and I think the combination hardly equaled in newspaper history. Indeed, I regard the mere existence of that staff as the greatest marvel I have ever encountered; for it was not, as you might surmise, composed of the outcasts and haphazard men of the profession, but contained unusual ability. One of the reporters was a poet whose clever verses are in all the American anthologies; two subsequently became metropolitan publishers; one is to-day the head of a great transportation system; one is a financier; at least a dozen rose to high rank in the newspaper world. Yet they labored there, most of them, for a smaller wage than street-car drivers received. Even the officers of the battalion were

wretchedly paid. The city editor received twenty-five dollars a week; the managing editor forty dollars; the editor-in-chief but little more. One influence that held us together was the general affection and respect for the editor, George Cary Eggleston. We saw that he was on our side and if he had been allowed would have dealt fairly with us; and his personal magnetism, tact, good nature, and sympathy salved many hurts.

This slow, dull, respectable journal had a small circulation, chiefly confined, I think, to old residents of the conservative and wealthy sort. It was a common experience with us reporters to be obliged to explain that the *Commercial Advertiser* was a newspaper and that it was published in New York. I remember that on one occasion it was spurred to a memorable display of enterprise. On the same morning and at about the same time Henry Ward Beecher died and a strange disaster with many fatalities happened on the Second Avenue Elevated Railroad. The combination was too much for the old concern and drove it to put down its head, throw its venerable heels in the air, and cavort like one of its youthful contemporaries. In the height of its excitement it issued an extra (the only one within my knowledge of it) of which seven copies were sold.

We of the staff were supposed to arrive at the office at eight o'clock in the morning. There was one edition at one o'clock and another at four, the first being (apparently) for the purpose of allowing the management to correct the reporters' English, about which was much ado. After the appearance of the second edition we were released, having conscientiously contributed eight hours of labor and earned perhaps as much as seventy-five cents.

My first assignment was to cover the Jefferson Market police court, which is hardly the billet I should myself

select for a reporter new to the city and its ways. I had an idea that when we reported a police court we sat at a table and took notes of the evidence, but in the first two minutes I was disabused of any such error. I learned that most of the proceedings were conducted *sotto voce* and the only way to acquire knowledge of them was to crowd in as near as possible before the magistrate and catch what one could while the line of miserables passed before one. As the line moved rather quickly and the hearings were of the briefest, one could only gather an impression of the cases that might be interesting and look them up afterward in the papers filed with the clerks.

Court opens about half-past eight. By that time there is a line of prisoners extending from directly in front of the magistrate's bench back to the prison door and by the side of this line is another line of the policemen that have made the arrests, each convoying a prisoner. The door behind the bench suddenly opens. Officer Curry, a very fat and wheezy policeman, pipes out, "Hats off in court!" and the magistrate, advancing swiftly to his seat, says as he comes:

"S'lemnly swear aff'davit by you s'scribed 's true so help y' God what about this man?"

By the time he has said the word "man" he has taken his seat and reached for the first of the affidavits which the clerk has neatly piled by his right hand.

The policeman briefly recites that he found this man drunk and unable to care for himself.

"Five dollars," says the judge and makes a scratch with his pen. "Stand down," says Curry, while the magistrate utters again the formula about the affidavit and the process is repeated.

It will be admitted that to a reporter down there wedged

behind the policemen that were testifying, policemen that were waiting to testify, and Officer Curry's expansive person, not much of this swift rigmarole could be caught, and yet it furnished all the material offered to us for a judgment whether the case were of interest and worth the trouble of searching the papers after adjournment. Very little opportunity existed to take notes, and the task laid upon one's memory and swift apprehension was not light, although its difficulties were eased by the development of the sixth sense that so often comes to one's rescue in emergencies. I mean that we learned to detect by instinct the few available incidents from the vast monotonous flood of misery that daily passed before the bench, and upon this instinct we proceeded.

Two impressions were very strong upon me. The first was the marvelous rapidity with which the cases were judged. The sitting magistrate was named Solon B. Smith: a spare, keen man, cold, poised, and with a manifest desire to be just. He seemed to be like a skillful and experienced diagnostician, passing upon symptoms so familiar that he recognized them, or thought he recognized them, with hardly a glance. On this faculty he seemed to rely more than upon the testimony, which often was plainly false. The policeman would swear to one story, the saloon keeper or fighting woman to an explicit contradiction, and the magistrate sweeping both with one keen look from behind his spectacles would cut them short with a curt and icy decision. The swiftness of these judgments at first appalled me: the line of prisoners might be said hardly to stand still, but to move from one door to another, receiving judgment as it passed. It was in a way a ludicrous thought and in another it was not in the least funny but a spur to grave reflections. These were the innumerable wrecks of

society under its existing system, and all society cared about them was to get them out of its sight as quickly as possible. It made them what they were and then hustled them to the Island. A vast majority were obviously victims of conditions. Some were working men out of work and for that marvelous offense herded to punishment with burglars and pickpockets. I will do the magistrates justice. As a rule they were kindly men; so far as they could in the whirl of that swift machine they tried to discriminate in favor of the clearest cases of misfortune, and to mitigate the savagery of the methods they were compelled to use: but the sum of their humane impulses was but little and in the main the tide set evenly toward punishment, merited or unmerited. The magistrates were in no way to blame; they were but agents of a system and, in all instances I knew but one, infinitely better than the system they served.

Another fact forced more and more upon my attention was the vastness of the misery of New York. I had always thought of poverty in my country as rare and the result either of vice or of idleness. After a time in the police court and a variety of experience elsewhere I began to see that poverty was the condition of the majority of the people, with areas and depths of which I had never dreamed; and the well-to-do might be judged to dwell upon an island amid a black sea of destitution.

To this day I know of no spectacle more instructive than that bare and filthy police court of a morning; the long line of prisoners gathered for all conceivable offenses from all kinds of repulsive regions; the benches filled with the wives, children, friends, or fellow-gangsters of these; the boys that had been arrested for playing ball in the streets aligned with hardened criminals and worse; the court room badly lighted and filled with mephitic odors; the railings,

the wainscoting, and the backs of the benches covered with an indescribable greasy scum from a million dirty hands; all visible aspects squalid and sordid and forlorn; it seemed the perfect epitome of the slums, as it was truly their product.

Still more to cause one to stop and think was to be found in a study of the faces that came into that room. What struck me first was their almost uniform pallor. In the West whence I came men and women were ruddy-faced; here everybody was pale, even the little children, with an odd tallowy, bloodless look. Then an amazing number of persons seemed to have unwholesome faces, puffed, swollen, distorted, or evil, or attended with the stigmata of degeneracy. Especially the faces of some of the young men struck a kind of chill into me. They did not seem to be human but to typify some new kind of beast of prey, and when these youths talked or laughed their voices and words were as extraordinary as their faces. Their hair seemed to grow down over their eyes, they had small features and narrow heads, their ears projected at wide angles, they had small, shifty eyes, and they seemed from the cases in which they figured to be capable of peculiarly atrocious forms of wanton cruelty and malice.

I had not been long in the court before we had the case of the leader of one of the most notorious of these east side gangs, by name Danny Driscoll. He was accused of murder and was subsequently hanged. As he was several times before the magistrate on adjourned hearings I had ample opportunity to study his appearance, which I soon discovered was typical of his kind. He had been born in a tenement of tenement bred parents and had never known anything better than the streets. He was no more than a boy but he had a girl mistress whom he

had shot down cruelly in some wretched quarrel, and he now stood in the shadow of the gallows with a callous and brutish hardihood that turned the spectators cold.

You will perceive that my education was proceeding apace, for these were typical products of the slums and from the slums came ninety-five per cent of the criminal cases that I was called upon to observe. Custom and the daily usage of business harden one quickly to even the most dreadful sights; but I never could quite escape the manifest illogic of the whole thing. From the court we daily peopled the workhouse and the prison; five other courts were similarly employed; the total of their operations multiplied an enormous cost and represented totals still more staggering. Ninety-five per cent of all our cases, whether arising from drink, criminal instinct, need, desperation, or what not, were products of slum conditions and arose from certain regions as clearly bordered and defined as the state of New York. And yet while we were busily trying to thrust these products into jail as fast as they emerged from the place where they were made, nobody seemed to be trying to stop the manufacture.

Every day or two the further pursuit of some case in court brought me in close contact with this process and I came to know intimately a hundred tenement district streets never dreamed of by what is called (in gross error) the typical New Yorker. The summer was intensely hot, the heat was aggravated by an unusual degree of humidity, and the conditions in some of the attic and rear tenements were sometimes nauseating and sometimes calculated to wring one's heart for pity. The tenement dwellers, I am sure, suffer more in the summer than in the winter, however cold the winter may be. After much wandering in many climes I am still convinced that a New York tenement

house street on a humid hot day, when the lungs pant for air and there is none but such as is fetid, rank, steamy, and heated like a furnace blast, is one of the most dreadful places upon this earth. Instead of wondering that in the police court we had so much of crime I fell to wondering that we had so little, since one could not be astonished at any products of deviltry that might issue from such places; and I declare to you that instead of gaining a lower view of humanity, I gained, by this circuitous route, a new respect for my kind since not all the dwellers in that frightful region turned savage.

A large part of the time of the court was absorbed every day with the cases of the women of the street, which were always handled with the greatest rapidity and about like this:

"S'lmly swear aff'davit by you scribed 's true s'help y' God what about this case?"

"Solicitin' on the street."

"Officer says y' were soliciting what 've you got to say?"

"Nothing."

"Ten dollars."

So she stands down and some dog-faced and bejeweled man in the benches pays her fine or she goes for ten days to the workhouse on Blackwell's Island.

At first I was puzzled by the great number of these cases and later by the fact that the same women so often reappeared on the same charge, being returned to the Island almost immediately after their release therefrom. I was led to wonder at the utility of a system that kept them thus on a circuit between the Island and the streets, the streets and the Island. They had violated the law, but the punishment inflicted never seemed to deter them from continuing to violate the law nor to deter others from

violating the law, and the whole thing seemed exceedingly futile and foolish. Every day in my experience we had about the same number of these women in court, but I was told that from year to year the number increased, and the slightest observation of uptown streets after dark showed the failure of the court sentence to discourage their activities or to diminish their numbers.

It seemed to me, on reflection, rather odd that in this case, also, society should be bent to punish the inevitable product of conditions and never think of abolishing the conditions. Yet the women were a spectacle dreadful enough to warrant almost any amount of attention to this subject; and of a sudden it struck me as strange that while we should try, even at the risk of life, to rescue them, let us say, from a burning building, we were utterly indifferent to the fact that their daily situation was worse than death.

An independent observation and experience tended somewhat to emphasize my conclusions on this subject. I was living at the time at a cheap Brooklyn boarding house. One of my fellow-boarders was a young shop girl of good appearance and manners. She left after a time to find other quarters. One day I was going to a fire in a red light district and this girl was leaning out of the window of a dive, soliciting the passers-by. She had gone the pace. I suppose something of direct personal interest is needed to make the average mind feel the truth about general conditions. I know I never stopped to think much about the hideous nature of this particular evil until that girl leered and beckoned at me from a window of perdition. The stories of these cases are one dun level of misery; poor pay, hard work, dreary lives, hopeless monotony, and the pit. I have seen a waterside hero whose

breast was covered with the medals of humane societies for rescuing persons from drowning, but I have not yet seen any medals for this other kind of rescue work that would seem still more important. In after years I had two or three assignments concerning young women that had thrown themselves into the river and died there. Remembering some things I saw at Jefferson Market Police Court and elsewhere it seemed to me that if they were started on that road they were better dead, at least so long as the best answer we could find for their problem was to keep them on the circuit between the Island and the streets, the streets and the Island.

Some assignments of those days cling in my memory as peculiar examples of the kind of injustice we endured in our relations with the paper. One day a report was circulated that the employees of the Belt Line street railroad, which ran along the North and East River fronts, were about to strike. Having an office full of men that he could employ without expense, the city editor dispatched a squad to watch the line, each having a section of eight or ten blocks. What we were to watch for I do not know, but our instructions were to watch—possibly to see if the rails curled up in the heat. I had Tenth Avenue from Fourteenth Street to Desbrosses. The day was one of the hottest on record in New York, there was no more sign of a strike or other disturbance than there is in your grandmother's boudoir, and nothing for me to do but idle about like a tramp. I sat on a log at the corner of Fourteenth Street and contemplated one of the dreariest scenes in the world. On the other side of the street was a ramshackle old frame house, almost toppling over, that I think was occupied by the family of a 'longshoreman. The good man's shirt, made of flaming red flannel, had been washed

and now hung upon a line stretched from the front door. You have no idea how that red shirt raised the temperature of the arid spot. I could feel hot rays striking from it and every time it swayed in the air a wave of caloric swept over the scene. The 'longshoreman's children swarmed about in breathless misery. The mother appeared at the upper landing of a flight of rear stairs, washing clothes in a tub of hot water, and trying to keep the children from the wheels of the passing trucks. And I sat there wondering why she should be so oppressed about their safety when life for her and her kind was visibly cursed with a burden so black and in all the region hope was banished.

There was no strike on the Belt Line. I spent forty cents and a day at Fourteenth Street and Tenth Avenue to find that out. As there was nothing to write, I received nothing for the day and lost the forty cents as well. I suggested to the city editor that I should write something about that red shirt and the children. He seemed likely to faint at the notion, and yet it would have been better than anything he printed that day in his huge and dismal pages.

Of a Saturday we were wont to inflict upon the public six pages instead of four, the two additions consisting of scissored miscellany of a dignified but indigestible kind, a few trifles of local interest, and sketches that the staff was allowed to contribute. By writing industriously for these columns, I added something to my earnings, which occasionally reached the dazzling figures of twelve dollars a week. At that, I fared better than some others. I remember a man of really excellent ability and character, a university graduate and afterwards famous as an art critic, who did Yorkville police court for an average weekly

compensation of six dollars. I wonder now that we had any staff. Most of us went without luncheons because we had no money to buy them with. Some dietists advise no more than two meals a day. I can conscientiously testify that working without food from eight o'clock in the morning until five o'clock at night is inadvisable if one is a reporter and gets one's two meals at a boarding house.

V

LESSONS IN GEOGRAPHY AND IN OTHER USEFUL STUDIES

THE winter came on and was as unusually cold as the summer had been excessively hot. From the nature of my work I was often obliged to see the picture reversed and the same tenement house dwellers that had slept upon the roofs for fresh air, now stuffing rags into window cracks to keep out the knife-edge of the wind. And I came thus to a clear perception of the true and grim proportions of the effrontery that called this a prosperous nation, since at all times, whether they be called good or bad, the vast majority of the population is always poor and the prosperity we seek must be the prosperity of only a comparatively small number. And it recurs to me now as a fact of some interest that a reporter using his eyes should come roughly and unscientifically to the same conclusions about poverty and wealth that were afterwards scientifically established by the investigations of sociologists like Charles B. Spahr, Robert Hunter, and John Graham Brooks.

We were greatly interested that winter in trying to send persons to prison. Most of them were former city aldermen accused of the novel offense of taking bribes, but there were also others that were worth writing about. Of twenty-six aldermen that in a spasm of virtue we attempted to land in Sing Sing, only two ever reached the portals of that gloomy place, and one of these was soon released by

the Court of Appeals. But to another group, being burglars, thieves, and the like, conviction seemed moderately easy and among these were some of unusual interest. I had journeyed to Sing Sing with the two convicted aldermen and had written stories of them and their trips. On one such occasion I saw and had a conversation with Ferdinand Ward, the fallen Napoleon of Wall Street, convicted of financial irregularities after the historic failure of Grant & Ward. Our city editor was one to whom ideas came not readily, but he perceived at last that Sing Sing contained an unusual number of distinguished guests, was a center of interest, and might be made the occasion of a moral tale as to how all these wrongdoers fared under the vengeance of offended society. And I was selected to furnish such a narrative.

A bitter place of instruction is a great prison, but wholesome to those willing to learn. Not wholesome to those condemned to be crushed in its awful mill; wholesome to souls still at liberty and disposed to see what society does with its victims in their last stages and how it teaches and trains them to prey upon itself. I was all day in the prison. I remember yet and always shall the impression made upon me when the long lines of men in the hideous striped uniforms came marching with the lock step up to the dining hall for dinner. So many young men with lives hopelessly wrecked at the outset; so many black indictments scored against our system of civilization.

I found the prisoners about whom I desired to write. Ferdinand Ward was setting type, Sergeant Crowley was in the shoe shop, Aldermen Jaehne and O'Neill were in the clothing shop, and so on. As I was crossing the yard under the escort of the guide that had been assigned to me, Principal Keeper Connaughton came up and said:

"There's a friend of yours that would like to see you."

"Where," said I, "in the name of wonder?"

"In the library," said he, and led the way into the building, where, in the convict's garb, and duly installed as the prison's librarian, sat the man I had known in Detroit as Frank H. Powers.

One day when I was managing editor of the Detroit *Tribune* I looked up from my desk to find standing before me a rather heavy-set man about thirty-eight years old, sallow and pale, well dressed in a bygone fashion, who introduced himself as an English journalist in distress. He said he had been attracted from a good place on the staff of the London *Advertiser* by the published reports of prosperity and opportunity at Winnipeg and had gone thither. The Winnipeg boom, as I knew very well, had now come to an end: he found himself out of work and out of funds, and was trying to make his way home. Could I give him anything to do on the *Tribune?*

The man spoke in the manner of the highly educated; his face and expression clearly indicated an unusual order of intelligence; he had an agreeable, low-pitched voice; and his conversation quickly showed that he was a trained newspaper man: but there was something about him, I could not tell what, that seemed elusive, disconcerting, and strange. I made a mental comment on his attire, which, as I have said, was of excellent quality, too good for a man out of work and in distress, but after a style long out of date. In the end, I concluded that men in London or Winnipeg might still be wearing clothes of the fashion and the point was immaterial.

I was interested in his story of misfortune and inclined to help him in any way in my power, but as I explained to him fully, we were poor, we had a small staff, we were

attempting the experiment then new to Detroit of a two cent morning newspaper, and I had no place in which I could put him. We had on at the time a very sensational murder trial that was to begin the next day. My visitor proposed that he should, on his own venture, attend the opening of the trial and bring me a story about it. "If on comparing it with the story written by your own reporter," said he, "you do not deem mine to be so much the better that you feel obliged to use mine, I will ask for no compensation and will not bother you again."

I acceded to this proposal because I did not believe I should ever see the man again, and he went quietly away. The next night he came in with his written story of the trial, laid it upon my desk, and departed without a word. I picked it up and with the first sentence perceived that we had found a jewel of great price. It was a marvelous story he had written, of a kind I had longed for but despaired of ever getting, and left me nothing to do but to print it. When Frank H. Powers, late of London and Manitoba, came to the office the next day he found himself regularly on the *Tribune* staff and assigned to do the trial.

He stayed with us four months and in that time performed every variety of work to be done in the editorial department and performed it with skill and dispatch. He wrote brilliant editorials, he produced local stories that were the talk of the town, he could edit copy, he could write good heads, he could make up the paper, and daily he gave me, in the quietest way, hints and suggestions about news stories that showed he knew my job better than I knew it myself.

At the same time, he could talk most entertainingly and in the manner of a polished gentleman, upon almost any

topic. He had traveled widely and knew Constantinople and Melbourne as well as London. I have never known a man with so many and diverse accomplishments; and particularly I have never met one of equal acquaintance with English literature. He knew the whole range of it from the Venerable Bede to William Dean Howells, knew it not merely in a dilletante way, but profoundly like a good student. He had a fund of ready quotations from the English poets that surpassed even that of Ernest McGaffy. With the comfortable egotism of youth, I had plumed and prided myself on the thought that I knew something about lyrical poetry but he showed me that this was only another of my errors. Compared with his knowledge mine was literally ignorance. He had a smattering of music, and sometimes after reciting a delicious old lyric like "Go, Lovely Rose!" he would say:

"I once tried to get up an air for that. It went like this."

And then he would sing a stanza to a tune that he either invented or stole, I do not know which.

All this, but particularly the newspaper facility, I admit should have put me upon my guard, but I was so dull that I never closely regarded anything beyond the quality of the man's work and his amazing versatility. An English newspaper man could not sit down at our telegraph editor's desk and offhand do the telegraph editor's work in our style: an English newspaper man could not know infallibly the taste and temper of an American constituency. Other things passed before me equally unnoted. Mr. Powers used for copy paper the letter heads of a contracting firm at Waupun, Wisconsin; of which he seemed to have great store. If he could talk like a university post-graduate, he could also on occasion descend to an abominable vul-

garity of speech. He developed a fondness for strong drink and for low company that was irreconcilable with his learned comments on literary art. But he could write dramatic criticisms that sparkled with brilliance and epigrams; and he could take a dull local story and rewrite it into a shape that fascinated every reader.

Except for his habit of drinking occasionally to excess, I had no fault to find with his service. One day we were talking about the London of Charles Dickens when he stopped suddenly, looked squarely at me, a thing he did seldom, and said:

"You know who I am, don't you?"

"I haven't the least idea," said I blankly.

"Why," he said, "I am Ross Raymond."

The statement should have been potent information to me, but it was not. Strangely enough, I had never heard of Ross Raymond. I said flippantly and foolishly:

"You may be Charley Ross, the kidnapped child, for all I know. You are a good newspaper man, and that is what is needed here."

He seemed chagrined and vexed at my response and went away in dudgeon. That, I believe, was on a Saturday. On Monday a new comic opera company was to open an engagement in Detroit and one of its members was one of this gentleman's wives; which one I do not know. Possibly he did not care to remain in the same town with her and possibly he was dead weary of the humdrum ways of virtue. The next day I received a letter from him politely resigning from the staff. He had, in fact, already departed, and the next we heard of him was at Springfield, Illinois, where he pretended to be Eugene Field, (whom he resembled as much as he resembled George Washington,) persuaded a hotel keeper to cash two checks

in Field's name, and went his way, the most famous swindler and jail bird of his times.

Such was the fact. When he arrived at Detroit he had come not from Winnipeg but from the Waupun, Wisconsin, State Penitentiary, whence he had just been released after a three years' term. That was the reason why he had so much copy paper with the name of the Waupun contracting firm upon it. He had been bookkeeper for the firm, which had prison contracts. The reason his clothes were old-fashioned was that they had been kept for him at the prison and restored to him upon his release. The pallor upon his face was the prison pallor: the thing elusive in his manner was the taint of the jail.

The life of this man was an exception to all the reasonable deductions of sociology. He was said to have come of a good family; I do not know; but he had a good education in his native state of Delaware and started upon a promising career. While he was still very young he wrote a novel that was well received. In 1876 he was a star reporter on the New York *Herald* and wrote brilliant articles for it about the Centennial celebration and exposition at Philadelphia. While thus employed he got into some trouble and started upon his course in crime by incurring a jail sentence. For the greater part of the next forty years he was an inmate of one prison or another—a commentary on the usefulness of our system of punishment, since as soon as he was released he steered a deliberate course for reincarceration.

Some of his frauds have passed into history. One day he appeared in Paris wearing a red fez and announcing himself to be the avant-courier of the Khedive of Egypt, who was about to visit Paris incognito. He selected the hotel for the august visitor and induced the proprietor to

tear down partitions and remake some of his apartments to accommodate the Khedival entourage. He went out among the jewelers and bought for the Khedive (without paying for them) watches, jewelry, and expensive trifles for presents. One of the watches was a magnificent thing, crusted with gems. Then he borrowed 20,000 francs of the hotel keeper and fled. I think this was by far the most profitable of his operations and even this was, after all, nothing very great. Usually the amount he gained by a swindle was not more than two or three hundred dollars and seemed designed to be just enough to insure a penitentiary sentence. For it was not the money he won that attracted him: the man was consumed by an irrational vanity in the fact that he was called the cleverest swindler in the world, and still more than that he was carried away by the idea of matching his wits against other men and proving his superiority.

At the time I met him in Sing Sing he was serving a two years' term for an exploit that may still be regarded, I believe, as unique for audacity and small returns. The great private yacht of some Wall Street broker was lying at New Rochelle. Raymond, clad in yachting rig, appeared before her skipper, and presented a note from the owner directing that Captain Roberts, of the British Navy, should be taken to cruise in the Sound for a week. The yacht obediently put to sea and for the next few days kept the coast in a state of wild excitement. The same night the owner arrived at New Rochelle, purposing a cruise on his own account, and was amazed to find his yacht gone. He kept the telegraph wires hot that night and the next day the yacht was reported off New London. He started for New London, expecting to join it, and when he arrived found that the vessel was then off Bridge-

port. The Bridgeport police in response to a telegram put out in a tug, but the yacht had disappeared and the next word of her was from Sag Harbor at the eastern end of Long Island. Meantime Captain Roberts of the British Navy, cruising up and down the Sound, sat at ease on the owner's quarter deck, smoking the owner's prime cigars and drinking the owner's best liquors. At one of his landings he slipped in a worthless check to be cashed—by way of practice, I suppose.

Of course such an expedition could not last long; with the police watching for the yacht in every port and tugs cruising in the Sound, capture was only a question of hours. Captain Roberts of the British Navy prolonged his holiday as much as he could and was brought into the port of New York, where he pleaded guilty and a few days later was in Sing Sing. We sat there and chatted without the least embarrassment on his part. He received me with the air of a gentleman entertaining in his parlor a visitor to whom he desired to be polite. We talked of newspaper work in New York and he gave me suggestion after suggestion, all of practical value. When I left he arose and walked with me to the door, bidding me farewell with a stately and polished courtesy that under the circumstances made me gasp.

After his release from Sing Sing he disappeared for a time and the next we heard of him was in England. The great fad, diversion, almost passion of Joseph Chamberlain, the English statesman, was orchids, of which he had one of the largest collections in the world. Raymond studied orchids, mastered the whole subject, won the attention and regard of Mr. Chamberlain (a very difficult feat) by talking orchids to him, became an honored guest at Mr. Chamberlain's house, and then swindled him by inducing him

to buy a kind of orchid that did not exist. The English courts take a more serious view than ours of such crimes and Raymond found himself sentenced to ten years in Birmingham jail. On his release he went to Philadelphia, professed reformation and became city editor of a Philadelphia paper, a post he filled with ability for more than a year, if I remember correctly. Then he once more wearied of the ways of honesty and retired (on some charge of ingenious fraud) to a Western penitentiary. His last exploit of which I have record was to pass himself off as an eminent Egyptologist, in the which capacity he dazzled Mr. Seth Low and the learned authorities of Columbia University and ended by swindling them of a few hundred dollars. He died in prison.

Few men have had smaller reason to commit crimes, for, as you can readily see, he could have made by honesty far more than he ever made by all his frauds. He was the author of at least one successful novel and a fairly successful play, and he wrote, without apparent effort, some of the most fluent, forceful, and picturesque English I have ever read. His rapidity was a ceaseless amazement to us. We used to think 1,000 words an hour was good speed with the pen. When he was enacting the part of Frank H. Powers in the *Tribune* office he would do 1,500 words an hour and seem to regard it as no task. In the prisons he always succeeded in obtaining light clerical employment and was able to utilize much of his time in reading, which accounted for his wide erudition. But why he was spurred to accumulate such stores of learning is as much a mystery as his unconquerable addiction to fraud.

But motive! Who can fathom motive? And how foolish in seeking to unravel a human mystery to be bogged much about that matter! In my professional career I have been

employed on, I suppose, fourscore murder mysteries and in a majority of these was either no discernible motive or none that a rational mind could deem in any way explanatory. Why, even the man of peace and quiet walk in one steadfast round of worthy endeavor does things and says things every day of his life at which, in a moment of introspection, he will be amazed. What motive had Scotty and his tribe for wandering ceaselessly in the midst of hardships? At the time Raymond was experimenting with honesty in Detroit we were plagued with a murder mystery of a peculiarly baffling kind. After some investigation I was morally certain I could go straight from my office and in thirty minutes put my hand on the murderer. And if I was right, for a cruel and terrible deed, involving the deaths of four persons, there was no motive more compelling than a disagreement about the salt-cellar at a family dinner. And on grounds of reason no more substantial than these stand countless other dark deeds in the records. The truth is no one has yet auscultated human life and the human heart, nor any considerable part thereof. We all try it and we all bungle at it, and the more experienced we become at the task the more hopeless it seems. I should say, for example, that if a man should arise capable of explaining why a delicately nurtured young woman can at one hour tenderly nurse, as an angel of mercy might, a poor devil with a headache, and the next hour go to a football game, soothed and sustained by the precious hope that she is about to see someone killed, such a man would be a greater philosopher than has thus far illuminated this darkling world.

But to this rascal, as to that other and far more innocent vagabond of my earlier days, I was indebted for instruction. Indeed, we learn from all we meet: for all experi-

ence is far more than the arch that Tennyson visioned. If one taught me the rudiments of the reporter's art, the other caused me to take a tolerant view of the matter of motive and to look straight to the deed, whatever may have caused it.

Something, too, was afforded by the force of contrast, for this swindler was about the only criminal I have known whose path was not made for him by his environment. But he was plainly abnormal and very likely in him, too, the causative environment that seemed to be lacking might have been found in his inheritance.

The winter, as I have said, was severe and edged with heavy storms. On New Year's Day a small party of Brooklyn men went down to Jamaica Bay to shoot ducks. The weather changed suddenly, a blizzard came on, and the men did not return. On the morning of January 3 they were still reported to be missing and the city editor handed me the clipping about them from a morning paper and bade me forth. He said:

"You go down to Jamaica on the Long Island Railroad and see if you can find those men. Go by the way of Long Island City and call up the office by telephone to see if anything has been reported here of them. If not, go ahead and buy your ticket." Careful man, he had ever an eye upon the weekly expense account.

In spite of many experiences that should have enlightened me I thought the city editor knew something of local geography and followed his instructions. I went over to Long Island City, called up the office, and then bought a round trip ticket to Jamaica. When I alighted at this classic spot I found I was three miles from Jamaica Bay and the only way to win thither was to hire a carriage or walk. I knew if I tried to walk it I should never get back

in time to get news into the paper that day. I had in my pocket one dollar and three cents. A hackman wanted three dollars to take me to the Bay and back. By virtue of much pleading and working upon his sympathies I induced him to do the job for my dollar. The day was very cold with a bitter northeast wind, the vehicle was an open rockaway, and I was but thinly clad. I frosted an ear on the way.

When we reached Jamaica Bay I found I was on the edge of a great level stretch of sand and ice without habitation except for one fisherman's hut. I explained my errand to the fisherman. He told me that nobody ever came to that part of the Bay to shoot ducks—nor for any other purpose, I judge. The shooting region was on the other side and about eight miles off. How could I get there? Why, the only way was to go to Long Island City and take the train for Far Rockaway—to-morrow. I could not get to Long Island City in time to get the train to-day. He had heard nothing about the men for whom I was searching.

I went back to the town of Jamaica, frosting the other ear on the way, and caught a train for Long Island City, which I reached about four o'clock. I had three cents in my pockets and was ready to faint with hunger. I knew there was a ferry from Long Island City to James Slip, New York, and my idea was to take it, go up to the office, and borrow enough money to pay my way home. On all the ferries of my acquaintance the fare was either two cents or three cents. I marched down to the ferry slip and was confronted with a sign that read:

FARE SIX CENTS

I do not know that I was ever more disgusted. The money I had in my hand, three copper cents, was not

enough to take me anywhere, I was eight miles from home, half-frozen and half-starved, and unless I should turn beggar there was nothing to do but to walk. I stood for some time trying to coach myself in some phrase of explanation that might seem plausible to an utter stranger, and appalled at the attempt gave it up. I knew my New York too well, I said, and started to walk. I covered the eight miles in two hours and a half and arrived home in time for the scrap end of a boarding house dinner.

The next morning when I reached the office, having borrowed ten cents from a fellow-boarder, I learned that the duck hunters had been found. The net proceeds of my day's work therefore were two frosted ears, some hours on the sand barrens, and a day of needless hunger and fatigue. Having no story I received no compensation. The climax was when I presented a claim for the dollar I had paid to the hackman and the lynx-eyed auditor rejected the charge. "We don't hire any carriages for youse guys," he said acidly. I was therefore the loser of the dollar as well as of the day. The owner of the paper was Mr. Parke Godwin, son-in-law of William Cullen Bryant, who had a reputation as a philanthropist and in appearance was a grand and kindly patriarch. I never had a chance to tell him what I thought of his newspaper, but if I could have done so with safety immediately upon my return from Jamaica I think it would have been an animated recital and worth his hearing. And yet it would have been an irrational resentment. The manner in which we were preyed upon happened to be sharply revealed, but it was in no degree worse than the rest of the system of wages everywhere. Like other working persons we were engaged in giving our toil for the profit of others that did nothing for the enterprise. They took from it much and

gave nothing; we gave much and took barely enough to sustain life; which is a perfectly typical condition and ought to have filled us with satisfaction instead of anger.

In any event the experience had its good side, little as it seemed to promise blessing. It compelled me to collect and reinforce my waning courage, for I saw that the situation was becoming intolerable and I must seek employment elsewhere.

I was the more moved to action by an incident that about this time gave me an unwelcome glimpse into the real machinery of the office.

A strike of 'longshoremen was in progress, and by mere accident I had attained from it some prominence in the editorial eye. It was the most trifling thing in the world and not worth recording except for its consequences. I was riding one day on the rear platform of an old Belt Line car in West Street, and heard two men on the car speak of an impending strike on the Providence Line pier which we were then passing. I hopped off the car, went to the pier, picked up the fact of the strike, and thus the staid old *Commercial Advertiser* was made to look young and spritely with a beat. To judge from the excitement it caused in the office it must have been the first in her dignified history, and thereafter the strike story from day to day was my own.

It had lasted four days and become serious, tying up every steamship line, when there came into the office three portly, well-fed gentlemen, one of whom I recognized as the active manager of a great coast-wise steamship company. I had reason to know him, for at the beginning of the strike he had met me with a volley of curses and foul abuse when in his office I had asked him for in-

formation. The three went into the den of the editor, with whom they were closeted a long time. When they went away the editor came out and gave me an assignment. It was to discover the exact full names and actual addresses of seven leaders of the 'longshoremen in the strike. Nothing was said as to why these names were wanted; I was merely told to get them and be sure that I had every name and with accuracy.

I went out of the office in no very good humor. Without knowledge in the matter I suspected a sinister purpose back of my errand. I knew most of the seven and liked them and was by no means eager to be the means of injuring them. Nevertheless, the sense of duty being strong upon me, I sourly took my way to the home of the first man on my list. It was in Barrow Street, far over on the west side, near the piers, the top flat in a front tenement. The man was from home, and I knew well enough why: he was at the 'longshoremen's headquarters, where he was helping to direct the strike. His wife met me at the door, a decent, kindly, intelligent woman, whose very attitude struck a chill into me; for dire fear sat palpably upon her. She was worried about her husband and the strike; she regarded me with additional terror as one in some way capable of adding to her misfortunes; and the efforts she made to propitiate me filled me with an indescribable distaste of my errand.

The three rooms were bare but wonderfully clean; she was manifestly a good housewife. She began to tell me about the strike and the reasons for it. There were two children in the household, boys, one about eight years old and the other about five. They were singularly attractive youngsters. The woman said that it was for them that her husband had joined the strike. Ten years the couple had

been married and had laid by nothing, because to live took all the husband's wages, and he thought if he could get more money he could put by something to educate the boys. If he did not they must go to work without any more education than their father had.

I did not report the names and addresses that were wanted by the editor. I said that developments and exigencies of the strike had prevented me from getting them, a statement that was truer than the city editor suspected. I did not know what the names were wanted for, but I found out a few days later when the seven 'longshoremen leaders were indicted on some charge of conspiracy because they had led and fomented the strike. I could not discover that anybody had ever been indicted for conspiring to condemn people to live in the conditions I had witnessed in Barrow Street and elsewhere, but those conditions seemed to me far more important and far worse than any strike. I was glad I had not reported the names, but the idea of making of the noble art of reporting a tool to serve the purposes of cold-hearted and greedy fortune-hunters like the three well-fed gentlemen that called that day upon the editor filled the measure of my disgust. I was convinced then that only the *Commercial Advertiser* would tolerate a thing so greasy. In after years I was to be dispossessed effectively of this notion, but at the time it was so strong upon me that at all hazards I determined to depart from a place so beset.

I had all this time, if you will believe me, a letter of introduction from Dr. Miller of the Omaha *Herald* to Joseph Pulitzer, proprietor of the New York *World*, but the last drop of faith in such documents had long been wrung from me. Of all that I had presented in New York the only result had seemed to be a colder reception,

a curter refusal, and my own more hurried exit. But the case was now desperate. There was but one chance in a thousand that Mr. Pulitzer would see me, but I must take even that chance; and one afternoon found me, I scarcely knew how, waiting at the foot of the elevator in the old *World* building opposite the Post Office.

Five minutes later I stood, rather frightened, beside an old-fashioned, high-topped desk at which a long, blonde man was writing, his legs and arms curled under and about him. He looked up after a time, regarded me sharply through eye-glasses, touched Dr. Miller's letter with his pen, and said:

"Did you send this in?"

I said I did. I had expected from all I had heard and read to hear from him a marked foreign accent, but he spoke like an American.

"Are you suggestive?" he said swiftly.

I said I did not know but I was a good reporter.

"Hum," he said, as if the woods were full of good reporters. "I am looking for suggestive men. What experience have you had?"

I ran over briefly where I had worked. I think he hardly listened, but regarded me furtively out of a corner of his eye.

"Go and see Colonel Cockerill about four o'clock tomorrow afternoon," he said, and dived into his writing. The next afternoon at four o'clock I was at Colonel Cockerill's door, whence I departed a member of the *World* staff.

It was a big staff and a very busy; I was not long in discovering that I was the least considerable part of the machinery and absolutely obscured. But for a bit of good fortune I know not how long I might have toiled in the

ruck: possibly for years and possibly to the end of the chapter. There happened to be in the *World* office at that time a condition so typical of metropolitan journalism that it is worth relating on its own account. What are called "office politics" were in a state of highly irrational ferment. The news editor and the city editor were deadly enemies and engaged in a savage attempt to ruin each other, and while I knew not one from the other or what the feud was about it was the means of bringing me a singular windfall.

Just at the moment the New York press was struggling with a very tangled news puzzle familiar in journalistic records as "the Rahway mystery." A woman had been found murdered by the roadside near Rahway, New Jersey, and the discovery of the murderer was hopelessly blocked by the fact that no one knew who the woman was, although she was but slightly disfigured. For the *World,* the news editor took charge of the story and worked out an almost complete identification which he published as a practical "exclusive" or beat. On close examination a hole appeared in this story and the city editor's eagle eye did not fail to discover it. He thought he could smash that identification and discredit his enemy, the news editor, if he could but get a man on a certain trail. He chose me for the work because being new to the office I was not allied with either faction and would probably do impartial and therefore not questionable work.

The identification story was founded on the fact that a certain woman arrived in Hoboken on a certain day by the German steamer Saale. From interior indications in the story the city editor made up his mind that this woman might still be alive and was not the Rahway victim. My task was to find her. I found some of the steerage pas-

sengers of the Saale and got a first hand description of her although they did not know her name, and then went to the baggage agents and traced one piece of third-class baggage after another until I found the woman in a back street of Jersey City. That spoiled the news editor's identification.

In his joy over this triumph the city editor focused his eye upon me and became aware of my existence. Thus by purely fortuitous circumstance (which in my experience has been the determining factor in all so-called success) and without merit of my own, I was stood somewhat apart from the rest. Some months later the *World* desired to send a staff man to Chicago as its correspondent there and the grateful city editor pushed me into the opening.

VI

THE HAYMARKET AND AFTERWARD

On the lake front of Chicago, where the grass would never grow, where the planted trees put forth their sad, discouraged leaves and straightway died, I was wont to see of a Sunday afternoon a small crowd listening to an excited and overwrought orator. He was a shabby man and gaunt, as if worn down by his own fruitless emotions; but his face was interesting, his energy prodigious, and his voice had a mellow and peculiar charm. His principal business, as nearly as I could gather, was to denounce the rich, against whom, as placidly they rolled in their carriages through Michigan Boulevard, he would hurl anathemas (not always intelligible to me) and shake a long, imprecatory finger. At which the crowd would sometimes jeer and sometimes faintly cheer; but in most instances remain dumb and look bored; for the seed of the orator's propaganda seemed but to fall upon soil as barren as that of the lake front, where the grass would never grow.

That was the first time I saw the man. The last time I saw him he stood in the Cook County jail about to die, and with that bell-like and penetrating voice pleaded to be heard. Between these two visions of him had stretched the linked events that had brought him to his death and constituted one of the strangest and most instructive chapters in our history.

Looking back now I can see that one will not understand Chicago's part in these things without going much farther than the Haymarket and what led directly thereto. For the whole story we must begin with the strikes that at intervals for many years had shaken the city; strikes of seamen, dock laborers, stockyard workers, street railroad workers; we must go back to these and to John Bonfield, Captain first and then Inspector of Police.

A large, powerful, resolute, ruthless man, Bonfield had pressed his way to the front chiefly by reason of his physical prowess and unshakable courage, for of understanding he had little. He went to peace by a way old enough in history, but rather new in American communities; he cracked all heads in sight until no man was left upright, and then announced that quiet was restored and the strike broken. I remember well a view I had of him in the great street-car strike of 1885, the clubs descending right and left like flails, and men falling before them, often frightfully injured. All sorts of men they were, not merely strikers nor strike sympathizers, but innocent citizens, caught in the throng and unable to escape. Repeated and bloody battlings of this kind firmly established in the community two conditions fruitful of trouble. Men that worked with their hands became convinced that the police were tyrannical, cruel, arbitrary, the professional and gratuitous enemies of the workers and the devoted champions of the employing class. On the other hand, another part of the community got the notion that in the city was a large element of desperate men, foes to society and order, ripe for violence, and only held in check by the constant vigilance of the police.

To both of these conditions such orators as this of the lake front unintentionally added. Well-to-do persons read

of a Monday morning what appeared to be the report of incendiarism uttered to an assembly of the unruly elements, and such things seemed a part of the sowing of disorder that had harvested so many riots. Workingmen saw that the worst possible aspect was put upon their meetings, even when their meetings were peaceful and innocent, and concluded that press and police were leagued against them and in behalf of the employers.

The result was that each Sunday with its meetings and each Monday with its alarming reports increased the bitterness on one side and the uneasiness on the other, and might have shown to any observer that the city was heading for trouble.

I have never seen these things treated of in any of the literature on this subject, and yet they made the pivot on which the whole story turned. Without the long and seated resentment of the workers and the accumulated fears of the rest of the population any such drama as followed would have been impossible. In the eyes of the world, Chicago, because of the outcome, bore many years afterward an unjust measure of reproach as a lawless community; and yet, in the same peculiar conditions and oppressed with the same misconceptions, I think the world has no great city in which there would not have been some outbreak as a climax of the trouble making. And those that think that in a republic we can disregard class distinctions resulting from industrial conditions might profitably study this record. The letters are red and smeared, but they are still sufficiently legible, and the first thing they tell is what may come when men will not make the least effort to understand one another, while one class accumulates a sense of injustice and another of unlimited power.

On the top of this smoldering heap was now laid, by

the hands of Fate, the eight-hour movement of 1886. For reasons hard to understand the United States had lagged far behind other nations in this humane reform, and when at last it began to be agitated many things combined to make it repugnant to a large part of the native citizens. It was of foreign origin and recent importation; it was vaguely supposed or imagined to be the creation of the International, an alien society of which next to nothing was known and everything was feared; it seemed to be condemned, or not indorsed by distinctly American organizations, like the Knights of Labor; it was denounced by many learned writers and scholastic authorities; it was bitterly resented by employers. Moreover, there was something ominous and sinister in the date chosen for the beginning of the movement. May 1, to readers of the foreign news despatches, suggested students' riots and anarchistic outbreaks abroad.

When the day came it was seen that the demand for eight hours was limited chiefly to factories in which was much foreign-born labor, and the fact increased the common foreboding. There were some parades of foreign-looking workingmen, some waving of red flags, and some singing of revolutionary hymns that added to the disquiet in timid men's minds, and then came manifestations still worse.

The most important factory involved in the eight-hour strikes was the great McCormick harvester and reaper works on the far west side. Close by, to the east, were teeming foreign quarters, mostly of Poles and Bohemians. The McCormick Company attempted to fill the places of the strikers, and riot after riot ensued. Patrol wagons dashing through the streets and filled with armed men became a common sight in that region. Sometimes men,

and women too, attacked the wagons and threw stones at the officers.

Throughout the district meetings were called every night to express sympathy with the strikers. The police undertook to break up these meetings on the ground that they tended to make disorder. I knew well enough that they often blundered and dispersed gatherings that were perfectly orderly and unobjectionable, but the feeling was now savage on both sides and the time seemed to have gone by for any reason. The police force of Chicago, always too small and now most unwisely directed, was overworked, overstrained, and to the last degree exasperated; and it was pitted against an element wherein were many men with a definite sense of class injustice and others that had been goaded into a blind frenzy of resentment.

Many violent scenes never found a place in the final history of these events. I remember a drug store in the heart of the Bohemian and Polish district that furnished the stage for one of these outbreaks, in its way rather remarkable. The reporters were in the habit of using the telephone in this drug store to communicate with their offices. The angry people got the idea that the reporters thus summoned the police. One night a mob gathered, broke into the place, and demolished the contents. In this work the wreckers came upon some bottles of wines and liquors; among them two jars of the wine of colchicum. All wine looked alike to them; they drank of it, and Fate avenged the poor druggist in the deaths of several of the rioters; no one knew how many. So great was the local hatred of the police, that I was assured and believe the people would rather bury their dead in back yards than run any risk of having a policeman enter their dwellings.

The reporters were often in great danger; the feeling

was bitter against the whole "capitalistic press"; and in the state of civil war that was raging, neither side stopped to make any nice distinctions. More than once reporters were rescued by one man's efforts from a crowd that threatened them. That one man was Albert Parsons, my gaunt and overwrought friend, the orator of the lake front. He was the editor of a fiery labor journal called *The Alarm,* and was in the thick of the eight-hour agitation; but it appeared that he favored revolution in the abstract and not in the concrete, and toward any individual in danger or distress he had an intuitive sympathy.

The next events went swiftly toward the climax. On one side of the McCormick works in those days was a large open field upon which was a railroad switch. About this field the strikers were daily gathered in crowds. On the afternoon of May 3 came to this place August Spies, editor of the *Arbeiter Zeitung,* a daily newspaper printed in the German language and devoted to the radical wing of the labor movement. He was a handsome, athletic young man, with a good presence and a gift of eloquence. Climbing to the roof of a freight car on the switch, he made in German a fiery speech to the strikers.

When he ceased, a shouting crowd, armed with sticks and stones, started for the works to attack the strike breakers there. These, badly frightened, cowered for shelter in the tower of the main building, while the crowd, in a purposeless fury, peppered the windows with stones. In the midst of these employments the patrol wagons came charging up, the police drew their revolvers, and began to fire into the dense throng. A part of the strikers made a momentary stand and then broke and fled. Many were wounded; a few fatally; how many was never well known.

At this the last passions were aroused on both sides. All the elements in sympathy with the strike and the cause of labor in general denounced the police as guilty of monstrous and inexcusable slaughter; the elements on the other side applauded the work of the police as necessary to enforce law and maintain peace and order. The lines between the two sides were clearly drawn. Thousands of men that had no sympathy with disorder or violence believed that war had been declared on the working class; thousands of other men that should have known better believed that the cause of the strikers represented nothing but sedition and anarchy.

Sympathizers with the strikers called meetings for the next night, May 4, to denounce the police for shooting unarmed men. Of these the most important was to be held in Desplaines Street between Lake and Randolph. Desplaines Street is a shabby thoroughfare on the west side, a short distance from the river and about half a mile from the edge of the main business center. Rather oddly, the meeting that was to pass into history as the Haymarket affair had nothing to do with the Haymarket, which is around a corner and three or four hundred feet away. Half a block straight to the south was the Desplaines Street police station, over which presided Inspector John Bonfield.

Afterward the police tried to make much of the form of the call that was issued for this meeting, asserting that it contained a signal previously agreed upon for a rising of the anarchists and some dread deed of violence. No one now need give any weight to this fantastic tale, which was only part of a riot of imagination that shortly seized upon the police. But it is true that in the jangled state of the public nerves the meeting was viewed with

uneasiness by impressionable minds. They thought that it ought to be prevented as likely to weaken the authority of the police and to encourage disorder.

The mayor of the city, who was then the elder Carter H. Harrison, would not attempt to interfere with what might be a perfectly lawful and peaceful assembly, but he attended in person to see that no riot should be preached. At the Desplaines Street station Inspector Bonfield marshaled the reserves and had them in readiness.

The speaker's stand stood at the intersection of an alley, in the center of the block and at the rear of the building occupied by Crane Brothers' elevator factory. About fifteen hundred persons came to the meeting. August Spies was one of the speakers; another was my orator of the lake front, Albert Parsons; and another was Samuel Fielden, of whom I shall have more to say hereafter. The mayor heard the addresses of these men and could detect in them nothing formidable nor unlawful. Parsons had made an end, Fielden was closing, when a storm was seen to be gathering. The audience began to disappear; the mayor started for home.

At that moment Inspector John Bonfield marched the reserves out of the station and up the street, himself at the head, ordering the remaining people to disperse as he moved upon them. As the front rank of the platoon reached the alley intersection where the truck stood, a spark flew through the air, either from the roof of a building or from behind what was left of the crowd, and alighted among the marching police.

There was a tremendous and blinding explosion, a roar that was plainly heard in the newspaper offices a mile away, and many policemen fell, dreadfully mangled. Their companions did not falter in this trying moment. They closed

up their ranks, drew their revolvers, and began to fire upon the dumfounded people, who fled in all directions.

This was the famous Haymarket bomb of history. At the news of it rage and blind passion seized upon a great part of the population. Here at last was the dynamite that had been threatened, the revolution in full swing, the reign of violence begun. Sixty-eight policemen had been wounded by that terrible thing; some in ways too shocking to be described. Seven died of their hurts; many were maimed for life. No wonder then that before an enemy like this, secret, subtle, and deadly, coming unseen and leaving behind such death and disaster, even men ordinarily well balanced took leave of their reason and clamored hysterically for vengeance.

Upon the police commanders the effect was of a temporary overthrow wrought treacherously by a malignant and long-detested foe. A kind of cold fury possessed them; they set at work without delay to exact a memorable revenge. Never, I suppose, in any city was what is called the drag-net worked so widely and assiduously. For days the police stations were filled with suspected persons, rigorously examined in the method of the third degree; persons for the most part that had no knowledge of the bomb nor of the meeting, nor of anything connected with either, and could not have. Amid which turmoil, Rudolph Schnaubelt, the man that threw the bomb, passed quietly out of Chicago and made his way to Germany to live and die in peace.

Swiftly the police conception of the desperate conspiracy was completed and arose upon the frightened vision of the people of Chicago. The bomb was the work of a great anarchistic organization that had planned the destruction of the city, that had made and secreted thousands of similar

bombs, that had drilled and armed a body of men for a murderous uprising. Doubt was swept away by a formidable showing of the *pièces de conviction.* Vast quantities of bombs, dynamite, and weapons were gathered from cellars and backyard caches all about the northwest side. To one that still managed to maintain one's powers of observation and reason, some of these discoveries soon wore an exceedingly suspicious look. The trophies began to be marvelously familiar. One in particular, a gas-pipe bomb that had been used as a copy weight in a newspaper composing room, was brought three times to police headquarters and placed among the prize relics of the raiding. It was easily recognized because the harmless printer that had used it to hold copy on his case had at some time scratched his initials upon it. Others of the exhibits seemed on close inspection to be at least as questionable; but the public and above all the newspapers were not disposed to be exacting. The bombs fed the excitement and the excitement stimulated to more bomb finding.

By no good hap, I must think, the operating of the dragnet and the handling of the fish taken therein fell to Michael J. Schaack, captain of the Chicago Avenue station on the north side, a man of restless and unregulated energy and, let us say, of small discretion. I have often wondered whether his delusions resulted from a kind of self-hypnotism or from mere mania; but certainly he saw more anarchists than vast hell could hold. Bombs, dynamite, daggers, guns, and pistols danced ever across his excited vision; in the end there was among the foreign-born population no society nor association, however innocent or even laudable, that was not to his mind engaged in deviltry. The labor unions, he knew, were composed solely of anarchists; the Turner societies met to plan treason, strata-

gems, and spoils; the literary guilds contrived murder; the Sunday schools taught destruction. Every man that spoke broken English and went out o' nights was a fearsome creature whose secret purpose was to blow up the Board of Trade or loot Marshall Field's store.

Into the presence of a police captain in this reasonable frame of mind was brought one trembling alien after another, and from the cells into which they were flung presently grew a crop of confessions that cemented the structure of conspiracy into a compact and durable whole.

From among the hundreds of prisoners the police and the state's attorney settled upon certain men that had been conspicuous agitators in the eight-hour movement; leaders of the advanced and radical wing of the labor element, fervid orators of the Sunday meetings, and men that had been reported by the press aforetime as making the bitterest attacks upon wealth and society. These were August Spies, the editor of the *Arbeiter Zeitung* and the orator at the McCormick works riot; Michael Schwab, his assistant; Samuel Fielden, whom we saw speaking at the Desplaines Street meeting; Adolph Fischer, a young compositor on Spies's paper; George Engel, an elderly keeper of a little toy shop on the west side; and Oscar Neebe, a German newspaper man, who had some connection, more or less shadowy, with Spies's concern.

The police wanted Parsons also, who was particularly well known to them because of his speeches, but he was not to be found. None of these men was accused of throwing the bomb, nor could be; what was alleged against them was that they had plotted the bomb incident as the beginning of the revolution they had agitated.

To these prisoners was now added, in manner very dramatic, a figure of a very different type. All the others

were avowed agitators and more or less in the public eye; Louis Lingg, of whom Chicago had never heard before, was no agitator, but a secret, resourceful, wily, and daring terrorist, of the kind that occasionally comes to the surface in Russia to shake men's hearts with some self-immolating assassination.

It was almost by accident that information was gathered of a mysterious young man that lived in the back room of a wretched house, tinkered day and night upon things supposed to be bombs, and was said to be of tremendous physical strength and dangerous character. Herman Schuettler, now assistant chief of police and one of the bravest men I have ever known, undertook the arrest. He ascertained that Lingg was in his lodging, which was on the second floor in the rear. Schuettler removed his shoes and in his stockings crept up the stairs to the door. He turned the handle noiselessly and found the door was locked. Then he put forth the strength of his gigantic frame and burst the door inward from the hinges. Lingg was at work at a table under the window. At the sound he swept about, gave one leap, and was at the policeman's throat. Schuettler, as I have indicated, was a powerful man of much and varied experience; he once killed a desperado with a single blow of his fist. He has told me often that he never had an encounter like that with Lingg. They rolled all about the floor of the room, down the stairs, and into the street, fighting like demons. Schuettler got Lingg's thumb in his mouth and almost bit it off, a fact from which the nature of the struggle may be surmised.

They got the wild beast to Captain Schaack's police station and locked him up, and without knowing it they had made no other capture so important. For Lingg's was the hand that had made the bomb; Lingg was the close

friend of Rudolph Schnaubelt, who threw the bomb; and if I do not greatly err, the whole shocking business in Desplaines Street was of Lingg's sole conceiving. He was the originator and leader of the Lehr und Wehr Verein, the only real anarchist society in Chicago; he was the undisguised and venomous enemy of all social order; and he was of such extraordinary strength of body and capacity of mind that here truly was one man whom orderly persons had reason to fear.

Some time after the prisoners thus finally selected were first arraigned for examination, another was added to their number. Albert Parsons was in safe retreat in Wisconsin. The police had practically abandoned the search for him. He read that the others had been arrested and were doubtless to be held for trial. According to his own statement, which there is no reason to question, he felt that his place was with his companions; that if they were to be tried he ought to share their situation. He wrote to his counsel, Captain W. P. Black, that he desired to give himself up. Captain Black replied, advising him to do so, since he had committed no crime and had nothing to fear. Whereupon, to the vast surprise of police and public, Parsons one morning walked quietly into the court room, opened the gate to the bar, and took a seat with the other men accused.

I need not follow the trial nor the various stages of the long and futile legal battle that followed. A large part of the world of men seems to have accepted the belief that the defendants were tried on the charge that they were anarchists. It may be well, therefore, to recall that they were tried on the charge that they were accessories before the fact in the murders of Mathias J. Degan and others, Degan being the first of the wounded policemen to die of his hurts. The manner in which they were accessory was alleged to

be that in speeches and writings they had instigated the crime.

Through all the trial, which lasted eight weeks, the other defendants seemed sensible of the perils of their situation. Lingg seemed never to know nor to care. Tilted back in his chair, an unlighted cigar in the corner of his mouth, he regarded the whole affair with savage scorn. He sat apart and held no communion with his fellows, of whom, strange to say, only Spies had any knowledge of him previous to his arrest. He took no interest in the defense, suggested nothing to his counsel, and sullenly refused to make any statement. When arraigned for sentence, the others delivered elaborate speeches, Parsons speaking for eight hours and explaining in detail his theory of the labor movement. Lingg uttered only some curt, defiant sentences in German, ending with these words: "I despise you. I despise your order, your laws, your force-propped authority. Hang me for it!"

Some of the aspects of that trial were of a nature that most persons believing in justice would gladly forget. Men that admitted a deep-seated prejudice against the accused, or even a conviction of their guilt, were allowed to sit on the jury. I doubt now if any fair-minded man reviewing the evidence would give credence to much that was admitted as a basis for the verdict of guilty. One witness testified that he heard Parsons and Fielden make incendiary harangues at the Desplaines Street meeting. He produced in court notes that he said he had written in his overcoat pocket confirming his assertion. He was far more skillful than I, then, for I have tried to take notes in the same way and have never been able to decipher so much as one word that I had thus written.

Beyond all this was the simple fact that these men were

accused of instigating a specific crime, and yet, so far as the trial was concerned, nobody knew who committed that crime. To this day the official record on that vital point is incomplete; for Schnaubelt was never brought into the case, his part in the affair was never officially disclosed. So far as the record goes, the bomb that night in Desplaines Street might have fallen by accident, or been hurled by a maniac, or by someone that never heard of the existence of the accused men. Until that gap could be filled it seemed to me then and seems to me now that to try to establish instigation was very idle. If we did not know who committed the crime, how could we determine what had instigated him to it?

But the eight men were convicted, nominally by the jury, in reality by a misinformed public opinion resolutely bent upon having a hanging. Anything more like the spirit of a lynching I have never known under the forms of law. Blood was to have blood; I grieve to state there was but little consideration as to whose blood. Neebe was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment; the others to be hanged.

While the fourteen months' battle against the verdict was waged to and through the Supreme Court of the United States, the men were confined in the Cook County jail. It was often my duty to see them there. Steel bars, reinforced with a steel netting, separated them from their visitors; but through this barrier conversation was not difficult. With all except Lingg I had many interviews. All, even to Parsons, regarded me, because of my newspaper connections, as their natural enemy and part of the machinery of the " capitalistic press " that had dragged them down; but that once admitted on both sides, they were always approachable and grew to be even cordial.

Observing them thus closely and repeatedly, and as a matter of my profession, I had after a time a clear understanding as to each of them.

Spies was in some ways a typical graduate of the Turn Verein, well educated, magnificently set up, fluent and plausible in English as in German, a blue-eyed Saxon, emotional, sentimental, and rash. His face, beneath thick, curling brown hair, of which he was rather vain, was handsome but not strong; long, sweeping brown mustaches contributed a dubious ornament above a fat and, to my thinking, a feeble chin. Schwab was the stage ideal of a German university professor, a thin, angular, sallow person, spectacled, long-haired, black-bearded, unkempt. I suppose him to have had the best mental equipment in the party, but it was a mind wholly speculative and dreamy. His manner of speaking fitted his appearance, being dry, remote, and for the most part extremely uninteresting. I could never understand how he came to be in such a position, for he seemed to have in his make-up neither enthusiasm nor sympathy and no more emotion than a grindstone. Fischer, on the other hand, was to be read like a book; he was a hot young proselyte, a half-baked student of German philosophical anarchism, and in his own mind exalted into martyrdom. George Engel's creed was the product of poverty and misfortune. As a boy he had been left an orphan, he had been kicked from pillar to post, and it was late in his life of toil when he laid hold upon some vague ideas of revolt. He had a chubby, good-natured face, looked like an elderly German bartender, seemed to cherish no resentments, talked freely and entertainingly to anybody that approached him, and viewed his fate with a mixture of stoicism and cynicism common in the kind of Germans that commit suicide. As to Fielden I hunted

long for a phrase that fitted his peculiar make-up and years afterward I found it in a Robert Louis Stevenson tale. He was "a mild, fatherly old galoot." In England, where he was born, he had been a Methodist field preacher. In this country he had been first preacher and then teamster, and eventually an agitator in the labor movement; not for selfish reasons, as I gathered, but because the cause appealed to his emotional sympathies. He was much the patriarch with his long flowing beard streaked with gray, and to conceive of him as in any way a dangerous person seemed a suggestion of humor. Neebe was a colorless creature, mild and uninteresting. His implication with the others was one of the most remarkable things I have ever known, for the trial developed nothing that showed he had any more connection with the theory of the prosecution than I had. He seemed to have been convicted because he had been indicted, and when I compared the evidence with the verdict I confess I entertained some profound misgivings.

For Parsons, I may say frankly, I conceived a strong liking, and whatever may have been the man's errors, I think it was impossible for anyone to know him without liking him. There was something immensely engaging about his candid manner, his picturesque speech, his manifest sincerity, and his abiding good-nature. He had traveled much and read much, but his thinking usually showed an incomplete operation, his original education had been meager, and his reading, I think, rather superficial. As for that, it is enough, I suppose, to say that he habitually spoke of anarchism and socialism as meaning the same thing, which is as if one should confound the north pole with the south. He had rather a good taste in poetry, sang well, spoke well, loved literature, and was a genial and attractive companion.

After so many years the passions and prejudices of the half-forgotten struggle ought to have died away and men may now speak candidly and without restraint of these things as they really were. Let me then record my deliberate conviction that Albert Parsons never entertained the thought of harm against any human being, for I have seldom met a man of a more genuine kindness of heart; and if the men he denounced in his speeches had been in actual danger before him I am certain he would have been the first to rush to their defense from physical harm. And while I am on this subject, I may add an expression of a wonder growing upon me for many years that no one has ever paid an adequate tribute to this man. I have not the slightest sympathy with his doctrines, if he believed in the violence he seemed sometimes to preach, which I could never tell. I have lived in the world long enough to know that the social wrongs that moved him to protest can never be cured by violence. Say, then, that the man erred grievously; if his error had been ten times as great it ought to have been wiped from human recollection by his sacrifice, and there should remain but the one image of him, leaving his place of safety and voluntarily entering the prisoner's dock. I doubt if that magnanimous act has its parallel in history. A hundred men have been elevated to be national heroes for deeds far less heroic. The fact that after all these years it is still obscured and men hesitate to speak about it is marvelous testimony to the power of the press to produce enduring impressions. Even the other staggering fact that in the history of American courts this is the only man that ever came voluntarily and gave himself up and then was hanged, even that seems to be eliminated from the little consideration that is ever bestowed upon a figure of courage so extraordinary.

Similarly I wondered while all these events were passing before me and wonder now, that no one ever stopped to inquire why such men as Parsons and Fielden were in revolt. Granted freely that their idea of the best manner of making a protest was utterly wrong and impossible; granted that they went not the best way to work. But what was it that drove them into attack upon the social order as they found it? They and thousands of other men that stood with them were not bad men, nor depraved, nor bloodthirsty, nor hard-hearted, nor criminal, nor selfish, nor crazy. Then what was it that evoked a complaint so bitter and deep-seated? In all the clamor that filled the press for the execution of the law and the supremacy of order not one writer ever stopped to ask this obvious question. Not one ever contemplated the simple fact that men do not band themselves together to make a protest without the belief that they have something to protest about, and that in any organized state of society a widespread protest is something for grave inquiry. I thought then and I think now that a few words devoted to this suggestion would have been of far greater service to society than the insensate demand for blood and more blood with which the journals of Chicago were mostly filled.

But the strange figure in that group at the Cook County jail, the strangest man I have ever known and the least human, was Louis Lingg. His origin and story were never definitely ascertained, but he was said, on good authority, to be the illegitimate son of a German nobleman. He was a kind of modern berserker, utterly reckless of consequences to himself, driving on in a sustaining fury of vengeance on the whole social order. Little of his abnormal physical strength was apparent when he was in repose. He was slightly under the average height, very compactly built,

with tawny hair, a face long and strong, and the most extraordinary eyes I have ever seen in a human head, steel gray, exceedingly keen, and bearing in their depths a kind of cold and hateful fire. His hands were small and delicate; his head large and well-shaped; his face indicated something of breeding and culture. It was when he walked, as often I saw him going to and fro alone in the jail corridor, that he seemed most formidable; for then his lithe, gliding, and peculiarly silent step, and the play of the muscles about the shoulders, suggested something catlike or abnormal, an impression heightened by the leonine wave of hair he wore when he was arrested; but when I knew him he was closely cropped and clean-shaven. All in all, for a small man, he was a terrific figure. To any question or remark he was wont to respond with a silent stare of malignant and calculating hatred, rather disconcerting, and I think that in those days few strangers observed him without a secret feeling of relief that he was on the other side of the steel bars. He was the only really dangerous man among the seven and the only anarchist.

Lingg's ostensible way of life had been as a teacher (not in the public schools) and a carpenter; but his real business was to further the creed of terror. He had been well educated in Germany, but his English was rudimentary. He had a sweetheart, a tall, statuesque brunette, exceedingly bold and handsome, who came frequently from the west side to see him. With her alone he held what could be called human conversation, and they always talked in whispers and apart.

Daily in those last weeks there came to the jail that other strange figure that played in this story a part so pitiable and still so strained and bizarre. The common explanation of Nina Van Zandt's performance was that she

was insane, but after the curtain had fallen on the tragedy she gave no further evidence of irrationality, and for years was lost to the public view in a way of life sedate enough for any taste. At her own motion she had been married (by proxy) to Spies after his conviction, although she had never seen him until his trial and had never exchanged with him a hundred words. She was about twenty-four, slenderly fashioned, handsome, always exquisitely gowned, and having the deportment of a refined and educated woman. It is impossible to imagine a figure more incongruous in such a place and in such circumstances, and the impulse that drove her there may be something for alienists or it may be something infinitely beyond their domain. Doubtless she thought that her marriage to Spies would awaken public sympathy in his behalf; but in the storm of ridicule that arose his cause was really injured.

When she came to the jail she would glance neither to right nor to left, nor give heed to any person or thing, but go straight to the steel bars. Upon them she leaned from one side, and Spies from the other; and thus they would talk the hour out. Her attitude toward her husband (in name) was as of one very much in love with him; but he seemed always ill at ease and bored. When eleven o'clock came and the guard, banging with wooden club upon the steel bars, gave notice that the visitors' hour had passed, Miss Van Zandt would thrust a forefinger through the steel net, and Spies would kiss it; then he would put through a finger for her to kiss; and in that manner they parted, with apparent reluctance on her part and relief on his.

The attitude of the public, meantime, was such as to seem now a curious by-plot to this strange tragedy. The majority believed that the men should be put to death,

being convinced that they were dangerous creatures representing murder and destruction, a view for which no man could be much censured if he read the Chicago newspapers. But as the days went by there developed a considerable and increasing opposition that spoke for clemency. Among the working class, the large and powerful Central Labor Union was a unit against the sentence and its course created a foolish but common belief that it was composed of wild-eyed anarchists and bomb throwers. As a matter of fact, few among its membership had the least tendency toward even philosophical anarchism, but all had a feeling that the condemned men had been the champions, however wrong-headed, of the working class, and for that reason and none other were being sacrificed.

Outside of labor and its influence were many that protested. Leonard Swett, one of the ablest lawyers we have had, declared that the verdict was wrong in point of law and should not be carried out. General Benjamin F. Butler supported his contention. Colonel Ingersoll, with characteristic courage, took a determined stand against the hanging, terming it a judicial murder. Henry Demorest Lloyd labored without ceasing to arouse a public sentiment in favor of lenity. William Dean Howells and many other kindly and broad-minded men protested on humanitarian grounds. William Morris from London uttered a vehement denunciation. George Francis Train broke the rule of silence that for more than ten years he had imposed upon himself and came to Chicago to speak against the sentence. Meetings were held and petitions were circulated in the same interest. Of all the condemned men Parsons had the largest share of sympathy. The magnanimity of his surrender and the sincerity of his motives made a deep impression on some minds. Governor Oglesby

understood the peculiar position in which the man stood and desired to save him; an intimation was made to Captain Black, a man of high character and much esteemed by the people of Chicago, that if Parsons would sign a petition for clemency the governor would grant it. In spite of every argument and appeal, Parsons refused to sign such a document. One reason that he made public was that he was an innocent man and entitled not to a commutation of his sentence but to his freedom. Another reason that he confided to Captain Black was that if clemency were extended to him it would seal the fates of his comrades and constitute on his part an act of desertion of which he would not be guilty. And so supplementing one act of heroic self-sacrifice with another, he accepted his doom.

The day appointed for the hanging was Friday, November 11, 1887. On Thursday the 10th, the governor announced his decision on the fervent appeals that had been made to him in behalf of the condemned men. He commuted to life imprisonment the sentences of Fielden and Schwab, but he refused to interfere with the sentences of Parsons, Spies, Fischer, Engel, and Lingg. Although she had been thoroughly searched whenever she visited the jail, Lingg's sweetheart had managed to convey to him a small dynamite bomb. At a quarter of nine o'clock on the morning of that Thursday, Lingg thrust this bomb into his mouth and exploded it. He lived until nearly three o'clock that afternoon. Though frightfully mangled and doubtless suffering acute agony, he never uttered a groan nor one expression of pain. In some way he still managed to smoke a cigarette or two and so waited for the end. A story was printed that a short time before he died he threw himself upon the floor and on his hands and knees traveled toward an open door in the prison ward. Before he reached

it he was caught and carried back to his bed. Behind that door were concealed other dynamite bombs wherewith it was his intention to blow up the building. This was the story, soberly printed, commonly believed. But the history of Louis Lingg was strange enough without the addition of the fantastic and the impossible.

Meantime, outside, the nervous strain upon the public had become almost intolerable. The stories circulated, printed, and believed in those days seem now to belong to the literature of lunacy. There were 20,000 armed and desperate anarchists in Chicago, an assault upon the jail had been planned, all the principal buildings were to be blown up, the streets were thronged with anarchist spies, the city was in imminent peril, the Central Labor Union had decreed a holiday that all its members might assemble and take part in the attack upon the jail, innumerable anarchists had sworn that the men should never be hanged. The newspaper offices, the banks, and the Board of Trade were guarded night and day. Nearly all citizens carried weapons. I remember finding at ten o'clock at night a gun store still open in Madison Street and crowded with men that were buying revolvers, and knowing the state of the public mind the spectacle did not strike me then as in the least strange but wholly natural. The dread of some catastrophe impending was not alone in men's talk but in their very faces and in the air.

To the spectacle that on the morning of that 11th of November Chicago presented, there has been surely no parallel in any American city in time of peace. One block from the jail in each direction ropes were stretched across the streets and traffic was suspended. Behind the ropes were lines of policemen with riot rifles. Thence to the jail the sidewalks were patrolled by other policemen similarly

armed. The jail itself was guarded like a precarious outpost in a critical battle. Around it lines of policemen were drawn; from every window policemen looked forth, rifles in hand: the roof was black with policemen. The display of force was overpowering; the place was like a fort.

At six o'clock in the morning the reporters were admitted; after that all entrance was denied. From six until nigh upon eleven we stood there, two hundred of us, cooped in the jailer's office, waiting with nerves played upon by more disquieting rumors than I have ever heard in a like period. So great was the nervous tension that two of the reporters, tried and experienced men, turned sick and faint and had to be assisted to the exterior, whence they could not return. In all my experience this was the only occasion on which any reporter flinched from duty, however trying; but it is hard now to understand the tremendous power of the infectional panic that had seized upon the city and had its storm center at that jail. Perhaps some idea of it can be gained from the fact that while we waited there a Chicago newspaper issued an extra seriously announcing that the jail had been mined by anarchists, great stores of dynamite placed beneath, and at the moment of the hanging the whole structure and all in it were to be destroyed.

The word came at last, we marched down the dim corridor to the court appointed for the terrible thing, we saw it done, we saw the four lives crushed out according to the fashion of surviving barbarism. There was no mine exploded, there was no attack, the Central Labor Union did not march its cohorts to the jail nor elsewhere, no armed nor unarmed anarchists appeared to menace the supremacy of the state. In all men's eyes, I was told, all about the city, was something of the strain and anxiety that made all the faces about me look so drawn and pallid;

but there was nowhere in Chicago the lifting of a lawless hand that day. It sounds now a horrible and a cruel thing to say, yet visibly, most visibly, all other men's hearts were lightened because those four men's hearts were stilled.

One other strange scene closed the drama, for who that saw it can ever forget that Sunday funeral procession, the black hearses, the marching thousands, the miles upon miles of densely packed and silent streets, the sobering impression of the amnesty of death, the still more sobering question whether we had done right? The short November day closed upon the services at the cemetery; in the darkness the strangely silent crowds straggled back to the city. There was no outbreak at the graves nor elsewhere; only everywhere this silence like a sign of brooding thought.

So the day ended and timid citizens drew a breath of relief that the prophesied civil war had not been declared.

And yet what was it of which they had been so frightened? What was the substance of the terror that had so shaken the city for many a day?

Six men in buckram, no more. Humiliating as it is, even now to admit, yet so stands the fact. I cannot see how any good can come from obscuring the truth, and the truth is that Chicago was at no time in more danger of an anarchist uprising, in more danger of an outbreak of violence, in more danger of destruction by dynamite, than any other American city was then and is now. Soon after the hanging, certain matters not essential to this narrative induced the New York *World,* with which I was then connected, to ascertain by impartial investigation whether the story that all the newspapers had accepted for veritable had in fact any foundation. The investigation went on for months. Slowly the conclusion was forced upon me that the idea of an anarchist conspiracy was purely a

dream. There had been in Chicago a very small group, comprising perhaps fourteen in all, of physical force anarchists, depraved and desperate men of the type that assassinated Sadi Carnot and the king of Italy. Of these Lingg was the leader, Schnaubelt was an associate, and probably these two alone possessed the courage for an overt act.

Next was a large number of workingmen that did not believe in acts of violence and had no sympathy with anarchism, but felt that the working class had been oppressed and maltreated by the police. These were often on conviction firm opponents of the wage system, but they were no champions of armed revolt. They might be willing to throw brick bats at strike breakers, to make speeches denouncing capital, and if need be to jeer the police, but they were no anarchists. Beyond these were many other men that theoretically favored the eight-hour movement and the cause of labor, and felt that the four put to death there in the jail had been cruelly sacrificed, but had no convictions nor impulses of greater danger to society. And this was the sum total of all the sedition and disaffection and perilous doctrine; unless we choose to characterize as an anarchist every person that entertains doubts whether present conditions represent the ultimate state of mankind.

Not yet, however, did we secure peace. The public nerves had been too much shaken, and besides, there were other sources of disquiet and other reasons for prolonging public tension. Captain Ebersold, who was then chief of police, has testified that Captain Schaack wanted to go on forming anarchist clubs and raiding them. Ebersold refused. Yet for months we were disturbed by new stories and red alarms of anarchists' plots and deadly plans of

uprising until, as sometimes happens, we were saved from further foolishness by a wholesome application of anti-climax.

This came about in the following manner. By the part of the press that was paranoiac about anarchism it was assumed to be certain that the furious revolutionists among us would not rest until they had wreaked upon the city a memorable revenge for the deaths of their comrades. The date for these great doings was finally set for the anniversary of the hanging, which fell conveniently upon a Sunday. Memorial services were held at the cemetery, and many sympathizers attended them, to the shrieking terror of the timid, but with no more disorder than there is at a church prayer meeting. It was then announced by the prophets of evil that the plans had been changed, and the date had been fixed irrevocably for the Sunday two weeks thereafter.

These two weeks were filled with stories so lurid and circumstantial of the terrible deeds at hand that even citizens that so far had retained their poise began to be alarmed. Anarchists were gathering from all parts of the world; strange, sinister-looking men were alighting from all the incoming trains; arms and ammunition were being collected; the Lehr und Wehr Verein, screaming for vengeance, was marching to and fro with magazine guns; united anarchism was to make one mighty outbreak and punish Chicago by dynamiting the public buildings and slaughtering the principal citizens. Minute, circumstantial accounts of all these matters were printed daily. Such of the newspapers as were endowing the public with this line of news even knew the meeting place where the anarchist clans were to gather that Sunday afternoon to begin the work of destruction. They knew it and they printed it.

Greif's Hall was the place, No. 54 West Lake Street. At two o'clock the vast hordes were to assemble, and march thence to blow things up, beginning with the city hall.

On the fated Sunday afternoon great crowds gathered at the indicated scene to observe the coming riot. Policemen with rifles were massed in the adjacent streets, the reserves were under arms in all the stations, the roofs of the near-by houses were covered with interested people. The appointed hour came, the moments wore by, the sun declined, the shadows grew, a bitter wind chilled the waiting throngs, and all the streets remained as silent as a country lane; no roar of explosion was heard, no tramp of armed men, no battling hosts. At last the twilight came on, the street lamps were lighted, the policemen returned to the stations, the crowds dwindled away, the show was over.

And the meeting in Greif's Hall? Oh, that was held, truly enough, and right under the noses of the police. It was a meeting of the German Housewives' Society and it gathered to knit yarn socks and discuss the infamous price of sausage; which placidly and contentedly it did all the afternoon.

On the publication of these facts Chicago laughed aloud, and at the first sound of the laughter the ghost of anarchy fled the city. It has never returned; we may be sure it never will return. That it should have lasted so long and fooled so many is its greatest marvel, for truth to tell it was never more than a shadow's shadow, though not since Salem witchcraft has there been a delusion with such dire results. Governor Altgeld was right when he said that we were in no danger that anarchism would ever take root in our soil. It remains now as it was on May 4, 1886, the delusion of a few diseased or unbalanced minds, which, if

they had not this, would be obsessed of some other form of dangerous dementia.

In the trail of the vanishing specter went also much of the bitter feeling it had aroused. To commemorate the policemen that fell before Lingg's bomb a monument was placed in the Haymarket. For some space of time it stood there; then under a convenient excuse of street repairing or the need of more room, it was taken away to be erected again, long after, in a wooded park miles from the scene of the unhappy event. No one regretted its absence. With no lack of respect for the brave men it honored I think Chicago felt it would rather not have a monument on that spot to remind it of one of the most painful passages in its history.

These reminiscences would be incomplete if I failed to add the sequel of the story. In 1893, six years after the hanging, Governor Altgeld suddenly startled the world by issuing pardons for Neebe, Fielden, and Schwab, then rotting in Joliet penitentiary. A story was widely circulated that he had bargained to do this when he had been a candidate for the governorship and that upon such an understanding he had received the support of organized labor. Years after these things had been forgotten Governor Altgeld told me in many long talks the whole story. There was no bargain nor understanding. Like many others, like myself, who had been a reporter of these scenes, Governor Altgeld had never been satisfied of the justice of the conviction of the so-called anarchists. When he became governor he sent for the entire record of the case. It was sent down to him at Springfield in two dry goods boxes. For months he sat every night in his study deliberately considering every line of testimony and every phase of the trial. He had been a judge on the bench; he had a sin-

gularly impartial and well-balanced mind; he read that testimony in the attitude of a juror. As he read he became convinced that the verdict was unjustified and the punishment inflicted upon these men was wrong. Holding this belief he had no choice but to try to do what still might be done to right so grievous a blunder. Five of the condemned men were beyond help, but three were serving terms in prison. His clear duty therefore was to pardon these three.

He knew perfectly well that to do so would be to close his public career. He knew that he was about to become the target for the hatred and the furious abuse of every reactionary and unthinking mind in America. He accepted all that in advance. He was a man with ambitions. He laid them all down for no motive but to be honest with himself and follow where his conscience indicated. He issued the pardons, and reaped for his reward political, financial, and physical ruin. When we are speaking about the heroes of conscience we might think sometimes about the career of John P. Altgeld.

VII

WHY HARRISON WAS NOMINATED IN 1888

THE annual message of President Cleveland sent to Congress in December, 1887, traversed all precedents, for it omitted all the subjects that custom has decreed for such a document and in about 1,500 words declared the supreme necessity of reducing the tariff.

With the explosion of this political bomb, up soared the hearts of two considerable classes in the country. The protected manufacturers felt that on the issue Mr. Cleveland had raised for the presidential election close at hand they could sweep to greater power than they had ever known; the Republican politicians gave thanks that their enemy had delivered himself into their hands and once more they could expect to range close to the political flesh pots.

Twenty-four hours before that message was issued few of these gentlemen had substantial hope of beating Cleveland for re-election; twenty-four hours after they knew that if they played the game adroitly they could not lose.

The only trouble was to agree upon the Republican candidate. Political machinery then operated upon a different principle from ours. In these days we have but a few great Interests to consult, not more than four; in 1888 hundreds of powerful manufacturers had their say about affairs and dictated to scores of political leaders

that they maintained, and among all these was an apparently hopeless division.

By the time the National Convention met most of the engineers that sat back of the machine and threw its levers had given up any idea of a quiet and orderly adjustment among themselves and were constrained to let the thing drift. A worse muddled lot I have never seen. Six prominent candidates, John Sherman, Senator Allison of Iowa, Judge Gresham, General Alger of Michigan, General Harrison, and Chauncey Depew had each about the same strength, but the manufacturers could not agree as to which they wanted, and the leaders could not determine which they could make the best terms with. This is not the ordinary way of describing such a situation, but it is the literal truth and every other old political reporter will so declare it. Anywhere except in the columns of his newspaper.

How, then, did the delegates function in this affair? Not at all. About one thousand of them had gathered, ostensibly to deliberate, to vote, and to choose. "You will see a grand and impressive sight," said an enthusiastic patriot when I was on my way to my first National Convention, "representatives of the nation assembled to select the nation's ruler." Yet, when we came to consider the actual situation, the delegates had nothing to do with the matter and might as well have stayed at home. For we, the reporters, seeking to divine currents and results, had never anything to do with the delegates; the question was always of the attitude of leaders that controlled delegations and cast each a certain number of votes as if he held them in his hands.

Each of these leaders (kindly note that I eschew the unmelodious name of boss) must look out for his own wel-

fare, his own supremacy, and his own relations to the particular Interests that financed and backed his machine in his own locality. This is the plain fact, whatever else you may have heard. To seem to be moved by local pride in the favorite son of his state is well enough for purposes of the play, but as a matter of fact the leader can have no time for any such consideration. The masses of party followers may indulge in what emotions they please; he must deal as he can for the patronage and support that keep his wheels still turning. And I have often speculated on what the rank and file of either of the great parties would say and do if they could be made once to understand the view that is taken of them by their adored leaders, or the real nature of the things for which great crowds cheer so vociferously in the streets, or who really triumphs in the battles of the polls. For, if my service as a political reporter taught me anything, it was this vast and irreconcilable difference between things as they really are and things as they are prepared for representation to the general public. The best place on earth from which to observe this difference is a national political convention, and at none of them in my time was the instruction better and fresher than at the convention I am now describing.

While the great men and leaders were thus floundering about, the real sentiment of the party at large, so far as it had any, was at all times for Blaine, but the gentlemen that steered things hesitated about this mysterious man. His fellow countrymen had not seen him nor heard much of him for many months; he had been long abroad, and his attitude on certain important matters, not in any way connected with national policy, was uncertain. He had said that he would not again accept the nomination, but unluckily that was regarded as insufficient evidence and

many wise and experienced observers in the press seats were convinced that Blaine would be nominated and would accept, in which case his election was regarded as a foregone conclusion.

I was still in Chicago as the Conventions came on. The Democrats met perfunctorily at St. Louis and the only subject there of the slightest human interest was the extent of the treachery involved in Tammany Hall's support of Cleveland—for the principal feature in politics is that no one ever says what he means. While Tammany was indorsing the President at St. Louis you could hear the grinding of the knives that were prepared for his bosom—such a sound, by the way, as has been plainly audible in every National Convention I have ever sat in, and usually from men that loudly professed loyalty.

Ballard Smith, an able and famous commander on the news field, was in charge of the *World's* forces at both Conventions. The Republicans met about three weeks after the Democrats. Mr. Smith came to Chicago a week before the Republican Convention assembled and we drove out Michigan Avenue boulevard talking over the situation. I told him that the elder sons of Mr. Blaine, Walker and Emmons, both of whom lived in Chicago, were secretly working against their father's nomination. He was much astonished at the news and said he thought I must have been misinformed. I said I knew both of the Blaines and had observed them well and there could be no question about the fact. In an unobtrusive but effective way they were placing ties across their father's track. I told him some places where I knew the Blaines had gone and some things they had said to the chief engineers of the Republican machines that afforded to my mind moral proof, although I had not been able to get the story into a shape

in which it could be used. Mr. Smith sat for a while plainly putting things together in his mind. Then he said:

"I think I know why. How well do you know the Blaine boys?"

I said I knew Walker well, but Emmons was often out of the city and my acquaintance with him was slighter. He said:

"Call on Walker again and see if he will talk frankly to you about it. Get him alone and at his ease. If the reason is what I think it is he will not tell you anyway. But see what he says."

I did not have a good chance to talk with Walker Blaine until three days later, which was the Sunday before the Convention met. He was living at a little club, the name of which I have forgotten, far out on the north side. I went there in the afternoon, having avoided making an appointment because it was not necessary to give him time to frame answers to awkward questions. He was a slender, tall, young man, with the dark olive skin and dark eyes of the Blaines, but bearing otherwise little resemblance to his father, of whom his brother Emmons was the image. Walker was shy, diffident, cordial within these limitations, and always seemed to be trying to placate somebody. We talked about the Convention and skated around and around the danger point of his father's nomination. Whenever we came up to it he was invariably ill at ease and cut away again as quickly as possible. Finally I told him just what I had observed and what I said could not be much longer concealed. He was painfully embarrassed. I repeated a formula much in use by reporters that I had no desire to crowd him but in such cases it was always best to say what he had in mind, and that I would use

only such parts of it as he would be willing, on reflection, to have published. On this he said:

"I will tell you this much: It is true that I am opposed to my father's nomination. The entire family is opposed to it."

"Why?"

He was more than ever embarrassed. "I will tell you one reason," he said finally, "and ask you to regard that as enough. We are opposed to father's nomination because we do not believe it would be well for his health."

It was quite true that Mr. Blaine's health had been reported as much impaired ever since the unfortunate campaign of 1884. But I saw clearly enough that his son had not given the true reason for his opposition and I had somehow a curious impression that he was under the domination of a mind and will stronger than his own.

The Convention came on with the leaders no nearer to agreement. Mr. Blaine's personal representative among the delegates was Joe Manley of Augusta, a big-headed, blond, lame man, with the combination not usual in my observation of a sanguine temperament, a ruddy face, and an extremely reticent tongue. When he arrived in Chicago he was noncommittal. After some conference with Walker Blaine and others he sought to discourage the talk of nominating his chief; but he would not say why, and about him from first to last was a certain air of mystery that puzzled us all.

Mr. Thomas C. Platt was at that Convention, having in leash the entire New York delegation. With this asset and his own reputation for power and prescience he was an object of endless curiosity to the crowds of visitors and of equal amusement to the disillusioned of the press seats. A furtive, gray little man with a little head, a little

manner, and a little slouching gait, he looked like a village storekeeper that had come to town to buy goods. Some wonder among the excursionists was occasioned by the fact that his part in the show seemed to be to try to look wise and to say nothing, but to the seasoned reporters a thing to occasion a far greater surprise would have been a noteworthy utterance from his lips. He said nothing in these days for the excellent reason that he knew nothing in the world to say, being as badly muddled as anybody and merely trying to scheme to pick up something for himself.

At the New York State Convention he had ordered that the delegation be instructed for Depew, but he had no more idea of nominating Depew than he had of nominating Blind Tom. He chose him partly because he would make a good pawn in any game but much more because his candidacy tickled the Vanderbilts. Depew had once been described by one of that family as its political butler, a description apt and true. He had been a faithful butler, was now president of the New York Central Railroad, and the family he had served so long and humbly was pleased that he should have the reward of an honorable mention at the National Convention. As the Republican manager of the state and owner of the legislature Mr. Platt was in very intimate relations with the Vanderbilt Interests. The New York Central was continually in need of legislative assistance, usually of a questionable kind. Mr. Platt could provide it. In return he had much and invaluable help in building and maintaining his power in the state, which considering the man and his methods was one of the most amazing and unreasonable powers that ever existed under free institutions.

For many years Mr. Platt selected the Republican candidates for the state and city of New York, had his un-

questioned will about platforms and policies, ruled in his party with absolute sway, and owed all this supremacy to his dealings with corporations on one hand and with Tammany Hall on the other. That was all. He had no more magnetism, power to inspire, tactical wisdom, or marshalship than the alley cat to which he was often likened. His relations with Tammany Hall were notorious among the political reporters. In the political Punch and Judy show Punch Croker was always beating Judy Platt with a stuffed club to the inexpressible delight of the populace; but as soon as the curtain had been drawn and the tribute collected the two winked and shook hands. In the municipal election of 1897 Republican headquarters sent to inquire of Fourteenth Street how many votes Tammany might need to elect Van Wyck, the Tammany candidate for Mayor, offering to supply any reasonable number. It was a four-cornered fight and hot. Tammany, in the person of a leader renowned and wise, sent back cordial thanks and the information that no more goods would be required.

As an actual possibility for the nomination by this Convention Depew was only of a humorous suggestion. Being president of the New York Central Railroad the bare mention of his name threw the unsubjugated West into the borderland of hysteria. Mr. Platt never knew much about the West beyond Tioga, New York, but he knew something of the bitter feeling among the victims of the predatory railroads, and he never had the least intention of another use of Depew's name than in making handy terms. But Mr. Depew, if you will believe me, took the whole thing seriously, and was really hurt when he discovered that the West did not relish the idea of nominating him. I have never yet met a man in public life that did not see clearly that he was the ideal man for the Presidency and did not

believe that in the course of time his superiority would be discovered by his admiring fellow-citizens. Alienists ought to pay more attention to this phase of insanity, for it is both widespread and curious and affords an entirely new view, I think, of the possibilities of the human mind in self-deception.

The *World* had a suite in the excellent old Richelieu Hotel, now a lost landmark in Chicago, and the next suite was Mr. Depew's. A connecting door stood open most of the time. Mr. Depew was often in our rooms and we were often in his. He was very friendly with the *World* and on confidential terms with Ballard Smith, whom he esteemed highly. In this way the operations of the machine that are rarely seen were performed before our eyes. But Mr. Smith's chief professional interest was in a very different candidacy. President Cleveland had taken an expert's view of the situation and was convinced that his opponent was to be Senator Allison. Mr. Smith had been much in Washington, he and the Clevelands were good friends, and the President had told him that Allison would certainly be the candidate. He was, therefore, curious to satisfy himself about Allison's strength. I was born in Iowa, my father and Senator Allison were old-time friends, the Iowa delegates and Allison leaders were all well known to me, and the Allison boom fell naturally into my division of the labor. The vote of New York when it should abandon Depew would probably be decisive, and the accident of my position, being close to New York on one side and to Iowa on the other, gave me a natural advantage in gathering the news, or some of it.

While the leaders were trying to settle their deals, the Convention was delayed as long as might be. I suppose that some allowance should be made for the exigencies of

the case and the size of the stakes. The men that honestly wished to have the party win felt that success was assured if they made no blunder. But, in truth, I have never seen a more pitiable exhibition of fumbling indecision and backing and filling. I think it a safe assertion that all great men look wonderfully small at close range. The occasion was one for decision and swift action, but all these leaders hung in the wind for days trying to determine whether they should let the Convention work the party's will, nominate Blaine, and take the chances about the patronage, or whether they should agree upon some other man.

In the progress of the time-killing that was the chief business of the managers I was a witness of probably the most extraordinary scene of the kind in the history of National Conventions. The reports of all the committees were delayed as long as possible while the great men of the party juggled with their conceptions of relative advantage and returns. Waiting for the platform report the Convention adjourned a purposeless and flaccid afternoon session to reassemble in the evening. In the evening again the report was not forthcoming. The tedious waiting began to get upon the nerves of people. The band played vigorously and two or three gentlemen made speeches but none of them seemed to fit the occasion nor to please the impatient crowd.

At the back of the platform in an inconspicuous position sat Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, his chair tilted back, his eyes exploring the rafters, his mind apparently at ease. Most of the audience did not know he was in that part of the world. Someone on the platform caught sight of him and started a cry of "Ingersoll!" "Ingersoll!" The crowd in front joyously took it up, a great shout swelled

from all parts of the building, and in a few minutes Colonel Ingersoll came forward.

For years he had taken no part in Republican politics, and had not been much in sympathy with his party, but it happened that in the present contest he felt a vivid personal interest. He greatly admired Judge Gresham and wished to see him nominated, but few persons knew the fact and all were utterly unprepared for what followed. He was in excellent form that night. I have heard him speak in public I suppose a hundred times and seldom with more force and purpose. The silvery voice, the flawless and unhesitating utterance, the telling phrase, the hot eloquence, all were manifest. The crowd hung delightedly on his sentences and cheered him to the echo. He spoke for the party as the friend of the laboring man and of the less fortunate. Now Judge Gresham was the workingmen's candidate but still nobody saw the drift of the speech until suddenly at the close of a burst of eloquence Colonel Ingersoll said:

"Feeling so, I am in favor of the nomination of Judge Walter Q. Gresham."

The Gresham men sprang to their feet with a scream of triumph, their cheers rolled through the hall, they seized their banners and marched up and down, roaring with delight at this unexpected indorsement. There were many labor men in the galleries; Chicago was rather a Gresham town; and the din was great. Suddenly it received a tremendous addition. The supporters of the other candidates, taken by surprise at first, recovered themselves and started, one after another, counter demonstrations. Bedlam broke loose, the uproar seemed to strain the walls and tear at the roof. There were eight thousand men in that hall and I thought each had his mouth open yelling with all his might.

All the banners were torn from their places; the floor was one mad turmoil of marching hosts. Minute after minute passed and the noise grew. In the din you could at times faintly make out articulate names, "Gresham!" "Allison!" "Alger!" "Sherman!" but for the most part there was nothing but a maddening jumble of roars. Colonel Ingersoll stood in his place, waiting for order and at times motioning with his hands. He had not finished his speech. The chairman splintered his gavel with tremendous blows upon the desk, but I, who sat almost under him, could see him strike the table yet hear not a sound he made. Eminent and well-known Republicans stood forth and shouted for quiet. The crowd never heard them and never saw them. Every man in that vast place was bent with a kind of ferocity on out-yelling his neighbor. Fifteen minutes passed, twenty, twenty-five. Colonel Ingersoll had given up the struggle and retired to his chair. The uproar had lasted half an hour, thirty-five minutes, and was growing always worse. Excited men struck at one another with their banners; a bloody riot was imminent. Fights had been started in the galleries. The situation began to be alarming. No man could say what might come from that seething scene. The leaders hurriedly and anxiously consulted on the stage. A man was brought from some place in the rear, a big man, with a big head, a big chest, a big mouth. He came forward along the stage. He stood on the front of it and looked down at the roaring lunatics and they heeded him no more than they had heeded the others. He opened his mouth. He began to shout and they heard no more of him than they had heard of the others. It was a big mouth that he opened. The short-cropped black beard that he wore made it look still bigger and redder. He shouted and from time to time he made gestures. It

became evident that he was reciting something but no man knew what. He continued to shout. He would shout steadily for a time and pause at regular intervals as if what he was shouting might be something in stanzas. After a time some men in the audience caught sight of that strange shouting figure and that big mouth and being transfixed with wonder forgot to yell. Then other men seeing these staring ones looked the same way and also forgot to yell. Then these began to wish they knew what the big man was trying to say and hissed for silence. Slowly, minute by minute the whirlwind began to subside. Finally there came a time when the one roaring voice on the stage could grapple with the thousand roaring voices in the audience; then a time when it began to prevail upon them and subdue them. And at last people could make out what the roaring voice was roaring and they broke into a quick sharp ripple of applause, and then all was still save for the one roaring voice on the stage, that filled and thundered and reverberated through every corner of the great hall, moving every soul there.

And this is what it was roaring: Buchanan Read's poem, "Sheridan's Ride." And silence came just as the big man reached the last stanza.

At that moment General Philip Henry Sheridan lay dying in Fortress Monroe and all men in the Convention knew of his last and losing fight.

And when the last line was uttered the Convention adjourned and went out quietly and solemnly, for there was calm after that terrific storm.

The man with the big voice was Colonel John R. Pope of St. Louis. So far as I know his performance that night was his one clutch at national fame, but in those few minutes he earned the heartfelt gratitude of more

persons than the members of the Republican National Committee.

The nominating speeches were made, the balloting began, and as had been clearly foreseen no candidate gave any promise of developing additional strength. The Convention was hung upon a dead-lock. And still the leaders could find no course to steer. A curious reflection pertains to this situation. In the Conventions of 1884, 1880, 1876, and previous years the candidacies of men were a matter of popularity and strength with the voters. In the Convention of 1888 (and sometimes thereafter) candidacies were a matter of arrangement, treaty, and negotiation among the leaders and beyond them of backing by the Interests. I have never seen any reference to this significant fact; yet every reporter that has followed politics carefully must know all about it, a curious illustration of the difference between things as they are and things as they are supposed to be.

In the midst of the vacillation and confusion the New England delegations resorted to a process analogous to throwing dice. They decided to allot their votes among the different candidates, trusting to luck and without regard to deals or any other consideration. The only clear idea they had was that the candidate should be a Western man. Luckily there was no lack of Western men. So Rhode Island was allotted to vote for Allison, Vermont for Harrison, New Hampshire for Alger, if I remember correctly, and so on. The chairman of the Vermont delegation was Redfield Proctor, a marble manufacturer of Burlington. When Vermont was reached on the roll call General Proctor would arise deliberately and pause until perfect silence was secured and then shout in a particularly piercing voice and slowly:

"Vermont casts eight votes—for Benjamin Harrison!"

The audience fell to waiting for this vocal achievement and laughing at it and cheering it when it came and in due time it made General Proctor Secretary of War.

William McKinley was chairman of the Ohio delegation, which was instructed for John Sherman. After several fruitless ballots a vote was cast for McKinley. On the next ballot there were several more and every mention of his name started a volley of applause. Some ordinarily shrewd persons thought they foresaw a stampede. There was, in point of fact, no danger that McKinley would be nominated; the various leaders had their respective delegations too well trained and too well in hand for any stampede; but the moment was intensely interesting and to the uninitiated seemed likely to make history, or so men deemed that were watching it; for in exactly this way General Garfield had been named in 1880. And then Major McKinley, at the head of the Ohio delegation, sprang upon a chair and in ringing voice absolutely and unequivocally refused to allow his name to be considered by the Convention. He said that he had been sent there by his state to further the candidacy of John Sherman, and that he would be a traitor to the duty intrusted to him if he allowed a vote to be cast for himself. It was a short, clear, manly speech, delivered with feeling and sincerity and it not only reflected credit upon Major McKinley but helped his fortunes. Men did not forget it. They recalled that in 1880 General Garfield, in exactly the same position, had sat in his place and kept silence while his vote swelled until he was nominated, and the difference made a good impression.

Yet there was no agreement among the warring leaders,

and no prospect of compromise. Mr. Depew arose in the Convention at the time appointed by Mr. Platt and said he had discovered that his candidacy would raise certain extraneous issues not for the benefit of the party, and therefore, in the interest of harmony he would withdraw his name. Mild applause greeted this expected announcement, which was generally believed to herald the fact that a steering course had been chosen. To the surprise of all not on the inside of things there was no discernible change in the situation. For once in his life, Fate and Chance had put Mr. Platt into a commanding place. Whichever way he should throw the New York delegation would be decisive. He alone had the making of the next President of the United States, and all the theories of popular rule and democratic control looked rather ill in the presence of that fact. One could hardly select a less promising figure to be the sole arbitrator of a nation's destiny. A small and selfish politician selecting the chief magistrate of seventy million people on the sole basis of what he could get for himself would hardly seem calculated to arouse sincere enthusiasm among patriots. Hour upon hour the Convention and the country waited under the belief they were waiting upon the deliberations of great men and wise, when in reality they were waiting upon Mr. Platt's changing views of his own advantage.

It was Friday afternoon when Mr. Depew withdrew. The Convention was to meet again at two o'clock Saturday afternoon. The Iowa men were very active and very hopeful. New York thought well of Allison. Mr. Platt gave them every encouragement. The nomination seemed certion. Mr. Depew's well-timed withdrawal gave him prominence and power. Men felt that he had been manly and

fair and he ought to be consulted. The suite in the Richelieu had many visitors that night and the next morning it was occupied by the last conference.

At half-past one Saturday afternoon Depew opened the door to our apartments and said:

"Well, boys, it's done. Blaine at two o'clock, Alger at four o'clock, adjourn at five o'clock. We can start for home to-night."

He looked tired but relieved. Mr. Platt had selected his move, the leaders had made up their minds at last, the conference had decided. With Mr. Depew we moved along to the Convention Hall to see the programme carried out. In another half-hour the thing would have been done. And between the adjournment of the conference and the meeting of the Convention Joe Manley got that famous cable message from Mr. Blaine refusing to be a candidate. By so close a margin did James G. Blaine miss the Presidency of the United States.

The Convention met. The news of the cable message had gone about among the leaders. They were once more adrift and the Convention adjourned (or was adjourned, for it had no volition in the matter) until Monday.

That night and all day Sunday there was hot work in Chicago. In a room in the Grand Pacific a knot of the leaders battled most of the day and all of Sunday night. For five hours I stood off and on waiting for Charles Emory Smith to come out and give me the piece of news that I wanted. The newspaper men had no sleep nor rest. At any moment the Platt cat might jump and as Mr. Platt was still bargaining and calculating others might try in vain to forecast the direction the jump would take. The Iowa men were most jubilant. They were firmly convinced that Mr. Platt would decide for Allison. They had been

long in conference with the New Yorkers. The thing was as good as settled. Allison was the man.

At four o'clock on Sunday afternoon I was writing in the *World* headquarters when one of Senator Allison's managers came to the door and made a signal. I went into the hall.

"What's the matter with Platt?" said he.

"Nothing," said I, "so far as I know. Why?"

"He's thrown us down flat," said he. "We had the thing cinched this morning and now he's gone back on us. And I want to know why."

I took a turn into the next room and found that the Iowa man was right. The kaleidoscope had turned again and Allison was out of it. I told my friend I had no good news for him and he went away swearing. When the word got out the whole Allison contingent was furious. They might as well have raged against the moon as against Platt.

Hour after hour the conferring went on. At four o'clock Monday morning the end was reached. Mr. Platt decided in favor of Harrison, the rest of the leaders ratified his choice, and the worn-out watchers went to sleep.

Not at once did we learn exactly what had turned Platt from Allison to Harrison. The observing person on his way through life gives over early the idea of accounting for human ambitions or the achievements of self-deception. Mr. Platt's secret ambition was to be Secretary of the Treasury and that was the thing that had been boggling the Convention for the last three days. He was determined to get this price for the vote of New York and to take nothing else. No other public man in the country would have been so incongruous a figure in such a position. Mr. Platt knew little of finance and nothing at all of economics. He was without the rudiments of information on national affairs,

his brief public service had been a sorry jest on the people he was supposed to represent; he could hardly express himself in the language of educated men; he had no more outlook than any other villager. Yet his little mind was fixed upon the Treasury portfolio, he would sell the Presidency to anyone that would give it to him. All Sunday morning he had been in telegraphic communication with Senator Allison trying to arrange the bargain. Senator Allison resolutely refused to accept the terms and by so narrow a margin did he, too, miss the Presidency of the United States.

Mr. Platt then turned to General Harrison and made similar inquiries. The negotiations were conducted through General John C. New, who was the Harrison leader in the Convention. We have been told that Platt regarded General Harrison's answers, delivered through General New, as satisfactory and believed that a distinct treaty had been made by which he was to have what he wanted if General Harrison should win. What General Harrison believed we shall never know. Possibly General New did not understand the language in common use at No. 49 Broadway; possibly he imperfectly conveyed its meaning to General Harrison. The temptation, if there was one, must have been great. Mr. Platt afterward believed that someone had yielded to it, had made a bargain for a great prize, and then repudiated the terms. When General Harrison became President he declined to make Mr. Platt the Secretary of the Treasury and Mr. Platt spent the next four years in thinking that he was plotting to accomplish General Harrison's downfall.

The Convention met and promptly did what was required of it. One picture of that morning I remember well. The nomination of General Harrison had just been made unani-

mous, I was hastening out the platform entrance of the hall, and in one of the temporary wooden corridors I came suddenly upon Walker Blaine, alone. He was stamping and reeling along like a man in uncontrollable emotion, his clenched hands raised high above his head while he cried: "Thank God! Thank God! Oh, thank God!"

The next day Mr. Smith and I were again driving down the boulevard and I asked him what in his judgment was the explanation of the strange behavior of the Blaine family and the final rejection by Mr. Blaine of the nomination he had sought from three preceding Conventions. He said:

"Mrs. Blaine. But you can never get that story into a shape in which you can verify it."

In this he was quite correct. The truth, I believe, was the slanderous and personal nature of the campaign of 1884 had impressed Mrs. Blaine with a hysterical loathing of such things. There never had been such a campaign in the United States; it is safe to say that there will never be another. One finds it hard now to realize that in 1884 an issue of a presidential campaign was the date of the birth of Mr. Blaine's eldest son, and that other matters were debated still more personal and repulsive. Some of these intrusions into private life filled Mrs. Blaine with inexpressible horror. She was a proud and pungent lady, and accustomed to having her way in her household. Believing that if her husband should be nominated again there would be a repetition of the horrors of 1884, she was determined to prevent any such ordeal, and as I fancy she and the rest of the family had small faith in the power of her husband to resist the temptation of a nomination she had inspired her sons to labor without ceasing to prevent such an event. I am interested to recall now that in the next

four years she quite reversed her opinion on this subject, and in 1892 she desired her husband's nomination as earnestly as she had opposed it in 1888.

Mr. Blaine had an overmastering ambition to be President. His name was before five National Conventions of his party. When he secured the nomination he was defeated at the polls. When he would surely have been elected at the polls he declined the nomination. I can think of no apter comment on the shuttle-cock nature of human life than the career of James G. Blaine.

VIII

WHERE WAS THE DANMARK?

As with travel, so with reporting, the charm lies in the changing perspective that constantly challenges the attention with a new object. Otherwise it is to be admitted that even when easiest the reporter's way of life leads through enough of hardship and vicissitude, sometimes walked with risk and sometimes leading to scenes of a nature to make him loathe his calling and forget its duties.

One night I sat, disguised as a coal-heaver from a canal boat, in what I believe to have been the worst resort in New York City. It was a miserable boozing ken far over in the Fifties, near the North River, in the heart of a region so given over to savagery and abandoned by the forces of law and government that a parallel for it can hardly be found in a civilized city. This particular dive was frequented by young gangsters of the type that had so appalled me when first I came to New York; their unrestrained conversation was about crimes they had committed or were about to commit; four of them playing pool had the day before been guilty of a peculiarly atrocious assault made in a daylight raid upon a tenement house. One of the gentlemen with whom I was engaged in a game of euchre I arrested the next day as a witness of a murder in which he was also in all probability an accessory. Three nights later I was in the home of a high army officer discovered in an act of dishonesty, and the gray-haired wife

and mother fell on her knees before me, raining tears upon the hand that struggled in vain to raise her as she pleaded for a protection against publicity I was utterly unable to give. Of the two situations I preferred that provided by the euchre game in the dive.

These reflections move me to cite at this point an incident that illustrates the uncertainties of reporting, which is not a very important matter, and at the same time shows a certain atavistic trait in human nature seldom remarked and still worth, possibly, a moment's study.

The steamer Danmark of the Thingvalla Line sailed from Christiansand March 15, and Stettin March 16, 1889, with seven hundred and twenty passengers, bound for New York.

She was due to arrive on March 30, and being usually as regular as a ferry boat some comment was aroused in shipping circles when she became overdue. The North Atlantic was in its usual springtime humor of fury and tempest, and the hope was that she had been merely delayed by bad weather; but even so men marveled that she had not been reported by any other vessel. When a week had passed without word of her the ship news men saw that something worse than foul weather had befallen her and their judgment was strengthened when, on April 9, the City of Chester arrived at Liverpool and reported that in mid-ocean she had sighted one of the Danmark's life boats adrift and empty. To the maritime mind here was the sign of a disaster.

What, then, had become of the seven hundred and twenty passengers? That was the harrowing question. The City of Chester had left New York on March 30. If the Danmark had been abandoned and her people had been rescued by another steamer by this time they should have been in port on one side of the ocean or the other. When had they

taken to the boats and were they now drifting about the Atlantic? Or had all been lost?

Any incoming deep sea vessel, steam or sail, might bring news of them. Therefore the morning newspapers sent reporters nightly to Quarantine Station (which is on the Staten Island shore of the Narrows between the Upper and Lower Bays) to question every ship that should arrive. It was the vantage point for this work because no vessel from abroad could pass Quarantine until it had been cleared by the Health Officer of the port. I was sent on this errand by the *Herald,* which, as the great shipping news authority, had a peculiar interest in the story.

Every night we lay under the shore in a fisherman's hut, watching for the lights of incoming vessels. When one appeared the gang of us put out in a row-boat we had chartered and overhauled our prey, usually as she was coming to anchor. Customs regulations forbade us to go aboard and the only way we could make our inquiries was to stand in the row-boat and shout at the steamer's bridge above us. Captains are not partial to these interruptions when of a dark night they are coming to anchor in a narrow and crowded roadstead, and on two occasions the work was prosecuted in a chilly drizzle; but for four successive nights we conscientiously recorded the fact that no incoming vessel, steam or sail, had news of the Danmark. New York is a busy port. We had seldom long to wait between our excursions.

About this time some seasoned reflection and some conversation with my sea-faring friends caused me to believe that no New York newspaper had awakened to the real merits of the story. A reporter is none the worse if he has a specialty that he studies for diversion or profit. Mine was an old-time fancy for the sea and maritime affairs,

a survival, I suppose, of boyhood's happy and often stolen hours with Cooper, Dana, and Captain Marryat. The *Herald's* city editor at that time was Dr. Edward Cohen, a very able man but no navigator. After the fourth night of the Quarantine watch, which happened to be a Friday, instead of going home I went to the office and put before Dr. Cohen an analysis of the situation like this:

Seven hundred and twenty passengers sailed on the Danmark; men and officers bring the total of persons aboard of her when she left Stettin to about eleven hundred. If they are lost, here is the greatest disaster in the records of the North Atlantic.

The steamer herself is done for. She may have burned, foundered, been sunk by ice, or sunk in a collision; no one can say. But the finding of one of her boats by the City of Chester and the fact that she has not been sighted shows that she has been abandoned and is destroyed.

Her people, or some of them, took to the boats. That is shown by the fact that although the boat picked up by the Chester was full of water, oars were still in it. Therefore, that boat had been lowered and used.

What has become of the people? They have not been rescued by any passenger steamer or they would have reached port long ago, American or European.

Then if they have been rescued at all they have been taken aboard either a very slow freight steamer, or a sailing ship, or the rescuing vessel itself has met with another mishap.

If they are on a sailing vessel they will inevitably starve or die of thirst. A sailing vessel might possibly have food in her cargo, but her water casks would last but an hour or two before such an invasion, after which she could come by not a drop of water to drink.

If these people are on a freight steamer it must be one of the smallest and slowest and as ill-able to feed eleven hundred persons as a sailing vessel would be. Among the slowest freighters are the oil-tanks. Possibly these eleven hundred are on an oil-tank. In that case, since a tank is provisioned for only a small crew, carries no general cargo, and only small condensers, the situation of these people is as bad as it would be on a sailing vessel.

But if they have been picked up by a steamer, how does it happen that the steamer, however slow, has not been reported by any vessel arriving on either side? The captain, whether of tramp or oil-tank, knows the steamer routes like the inside of his hand. He would assuredly get into them and keep along them, looking for help. Yet we have had no word. A sailing vessel, to be sure, might be driven far from the steamer lanes and never be seen until she raised the Highlands. But if they are on a sailing vessel hardly a chance remains that they are alive.

What is it then? Are they still on the boats and drifting about the middle of the Atlantic? In that case they are dead or dying of hunger, cold, and exposure. Have they been rescued by another steamer that has since met with disaster? In that case we have two wrecks instead of one and the greatest story that ever was told of the sea.

The city editor was very much taken with this view of the case and told me to write for Monday's issue a full story of four or five columns, presenting these points and illustrating them, as I had suggested, with instances from the annals of the transatlantic trade, strewn with wrecks enough, as everybody knows. Monday morning was selected for this publication for the reason that Sunday was always the dullest day in the week and the wise city editor was alert for available Monday morning material.

I returned to the Quarantine watch and that night being Saturday was the busiest of all our vigil. In those days most of the transatlantic steamers were of two varieties, the new, fast boats that crossed in about seven days and the older and slower boats that crossed in about ten. The seven-day boats sailed on Saturday and the ten-day boats on Wednesday, which usually brought them to Quarantine in a bunch between Saturday noon and Sunday morning.

Most of the big fellows were in and had been conscientiously hailed from our row-boat when one o'clock came and the reporters for the other papers withdrew. The *Herald,* being the great journal of the shipping interests, and having an eye to the chances of a Sunday extra, if the news were startling, commissioned me to stay until the last of the fleet had arrived. At intervals of an hour or so the lights kept swinging into view down the fairway and as fast as one was discovered I voyaged out, with only the old boatman for company. Last of all came the Cunarder Etruria, then holder of the speed record of the North Atlantic. The sun was rising as her big hull showed above Hoffman Island.

At that time Cunard steamers were not compelled to anchor at Quarantine; they must stop there until they should be cleared, but if a Cunard captain chose he could lie in the stream and await the doctor's boat, which, old observers noted, went always to a Cunarder first. The reasons for these attentions were not publicly discussed, but they must have been powerful. On the present occasion, day having broken and the captain doubtless in haste to get to his pier, the Etruria did not anchor, but stopped her engines off Clifton, the next point above Quarantine station, and waited for the doctor.

A strong spring tide was running out and she began to

drift astern. When she had floated down as far as Fort Wadsworth she flapped her propeller and went up to her former station. My row-boat was heavy, progress against the tide was slow, but we made the Etruria's quarter all right, and thence worked forward until we were under the bridge. I was on my feet, with my hands to my mouth, about to hail the captain, when the pilot, perceiving that the steamer had drifted too far down, rang ahead and before she stopped she was a mile from where we lay.

The old boatman lumbered along in pursuit. He had been rowing all night and, with a lack of consideration for which I am now ashamed, it never occurred to me he might be weary. As we fought our way foot by foot up the Etruria's black side, a crowd of immigrants leaned over the rail and encouraged us with comment in which the sportive and sarcastic note predominated. We were once more under the bridge, and I on my feet was calling for the captain, when a violent lurch all but threw me overboard and the boat began to slide swiftly astern. The boatman at the oars had fallen in a faint and was now on his back with his legs in the air.

I rescued the oars from going overboard, which would have been a sore calamity, and hastily began to row. It sounds inhuman but I could expend no time upon the boatman, who might be dead for all I knew. My exclusive concern was to catch that steamer before she could get away. I fought the tide once more, stimulated by a loud and candid chorus from the steerage (now humorously convinced that both of us were drunk), rowed ahead of the Etruria, stood up as my boat slipped down the tide, brought Captain McMillan to the side, and before I had drifted out of hearing extracted from him the information that he had no news of the Danmark; an achievement of which,

if you please, I am still vain. Then I got my speechless boatman to shore, saw him revived, and started for the office.

That completed Saturday night. The morning was all but gone when I arrived and I deemed it best to work at once upon my long story for the next day's issue. More time was required than I had expected, for many instances that I desired to cite must be sought in the *Herald's* files, and even with the aid of the *Herald's* matchless and truly wonderful index system, the task was slow. I was still bent upon it at five o'clock in the afternoon when the news editor came upstairs with an Associated Press dispatch from Lisbon that in an instant changed all the outlook, made my labors useless, and deprived the world of what I was convinced was some rarely beautiful literature.

In those days was no cable connection with the Azores. The Associated Press dispatch said that a Portuguese steamer had reached Lisbon from Fayal, in the Azores, bringing the news that the steamer Missouri had put in there with the passengers and crew of the Danmark, picked up at sea. The Missouri, said the dispatch, was short of provisions and had stayed several days in port to refit. After which she had started on a certain day for Philadelphia, taking about half of the passengers.

Nothing was hinted as to the nature of the accident to the Danmark.

The Missouri was a cattle steamer of the Atlantic Transport Line, plying between Philadelphia and Liverpool. When would she arrive at Philadelphia? That was the next question. Careful estimates of her average speed, based upon records in the maritime journals of her departures and arrivals, showed that if she sailed from Fayal as reported she would be due at Philadelphia on Monday, the very next day.

Two of us were now assigned to go hot foot to Philadelphia, hire a tug, and go down the Delaware to meet the Missouri coming up. We reached Philadelphia at half-past eight, and began to ransack the water front for an available tug. It was a Sunday evening, and outwardly Philadelphia then observed the Sabbath day to a degree that would have filled one of my Puritan ancestors with solemn joy. The oldest inhabitants of the water front kindly assured us that we could no more get a tug on Sunday night than we could go to perdition, a statement that seemed superfluous in view of the condition of mind to which we had then arrived. Even a worldly service so innocuous as a cab seemed impossible to be had. Far down on the water front, near the ragged end of town, we got news of a tug, found it, and went aboard only to learn that the captain and owner lived miles away in one of Philadelphia's interminable and apparently identical suburbs. The ancient sea-going tub of a coupé that we had succeeded in commandeering made but heavy weather on this dreary voyage; and midnight came before we drew up before the captain's house, which stood in a row of similar houses, on a moderate compilation, of a mile and a half in length. The fact that one could be distinguished from another even by the inhabitants must always strike the stranger as singular evidence of human capacity.

The worthy captain was asleep. When to him, standing in his night shirt at an upper window, had been conveyed from us, standing on the side-walk below, intelligence of what was toward, he said that he would go all right if he could get his engineer and crew, and about the crew he was dismal with doubt. The occasion being Sunday and the place being Philadelphia, his expert opinion was that there was nothing for any crew to do but at a remote

and lawless place called, I think, a blind tiger, in sheer desperation to ply assiduously the bottle. Still, the engineer might be reasonably sober and the chance was worth a journey to his house. Where was the engineer? Oh, he lived out here at Ben Franklin and John Hancock Streets. How far was that? About two miles. Loud groans arose from the coupé at the news.

However, the captain cheerfully offered to accompany us if we would wait until he was clothed. He did yet more, for he sat with the driver and piloted our ancient craft, by the which mercy we arrived at our destination instead of getting lost. Fortune also favored us so far that the engineer warmed to the enterprise and by his own exertions unearthed a passable crew.

The next requisite was a permit from the Collector of the Port to board the Missouri, when we should find her; to secure which we must undergo another far journey and rout from his slumbers in a bosky suburb another excellent citizen. After which the tug must be coaled. All of which having been concluded, at five o'clock with the dawn breaking, the tug, a wheezy and dubious contraption, made shift to get down the river. This completed Sunday night.

By this time I was dead tired, having been two nights and two days without sleep. My purpose was to get some rest between our departure and the appearance of the Missouri, but first it developed that the ship was without a mate and I was called upon to steer while the captain went below to get his breakfast; immediately after which there was a cry that the Missouri was coming. All hands got to the upper deck to examine the approaching steamer, and when she was near enough she was discovered to be the British tramp Hawarden. Far down the river was the trailing smoke of another steamer, which proved after a

half-hour of anxious watching to be a German; and thus the false alarms succeeded one another and I was still on my feet when about one o'clock below Wilmington, Delaware, the veritable Missouri hove in sight. We hauled alongside and climbed aboard.

There the whole story was presently in our hands. The Danmark had pounded steadily along until she was almost half-way over. About five o'clock of a morning the shaft suddenly broke aft of the thrust. She was a single screw steamer; in those days we had scarcely anything else. At once the engine, relieved of its weight, began to race, and the inboard end of the broken shaft, being now unsupported, whirled wildly around, smashing through the vessel's skin.

The second engineer was in charge. At the sound he made a leap for the valve, missed his footing, fell, and was instantly killed. His assistant on watch shut off the steam. But the poor old Danmark had been stabbed in the vital part; the water poured in through the shaft tunnel; nothing could keep it out; and as the fires were soon extinguished the pumps were useless. It was plain from the first she had but a short time to float.

A heavy sea was running and the chance of a boat journey looked desperate enough, but it alone was left. The passengers were hustled on deck; the boats were provisioned and slung free, and seem to have been sufficient in number and in a condition to float. Two or three had been launched and filled with passengers when the look-outs that had been sent to the mastheads sighted the Missouri. She was signaled and came tearing up with all the steam she could raise.

The honor of the next two hours' work belongs partly to Captain Hamilton B. Murrell of the Missouri and still more to his seamen. He stood lashed to a grating over

his vessel's side and directed every detail of an operation extremely delicate and hazardous, for eleven hundred persons must be transferred in a boiling sea and the Missouri was no passenger ship. All the boats of the Missouri and all the boats of the Danmark were hard at it, tossed about like corks, now as high as the Missouri's bridge, now thirty feel below it; and there were many women and children among the passengers. One great difficulty was to keep the overloaded boats from filling in the heavy surges; only incessant care, with good judgment and skill, kept them from being smashed to bits while the passengers, mostly in slings, were being hoisted up the side. But so laboring they got aboard the Missouri every soul the Danmark had carried, and without a mishap. When the last boat-load left the stricken steamer her upper deck was almost awash and the sailors had barely cleared the radius of danger from suction when she gave the final lurch and went down. So narrow was the escape.

The Missouri carried stores enough for only a small crew. Captain Murrell saw that he could not carry to an American port the eleven hundred persons whose lives he had thus so providentially saved, and he hooked up for the Azores. Even with everybody on half rations the food was exhausted before he had gone far, and for the last twenty-four hours nobody had anything to eat. All the Missourians shared generously with the rescued ones and all went hungry together. The accommodations on board were necessarily of the crudest, but the carpenter and the sailors working together, made of canvas and straw something like beds. It was a fortunate chance that the Missouri, being a cattle boat, was fitted with enormous condensers and the supply of fresh water was unlimited.

At Fayal the inhabitants poured upon the waifs every

kindness. Most of the passengers had no more clothing than they stood in. The people of Fayal supplied all these needs, found lodging and shelter for the unfortunates, helped Captain Murrell to replenish his stores and line his forecastle with bunks, and cheered him to the echo when with one-half of the Danmark's survivors, being all he could accommodate on his ship, he sailed for Philadelphia. The remainder were later brought to New York by the steamer Wieland.

This was the story gathered from many grateful souls as the Missouri swept around the curves of the Delaware. At six o'clock we were off the lower end of the city. And here I observed a thing that filled me with wonder. The bare fact of the rescue had been printed in that day's newspapers and now, behold, every pier end was black with shouting people, every street end and vacant spot was thronged. As we came along bells rang for joy, whistles were blown on every steamer, vast crowds cheered and cheered again. As the Missouri worked into her slip, the wharf was seen to be packed with people, men shouted and shook hands and manifested an exuberant rejoicing. Few of the survivors had relatives, friends, or acquaintances in that great crowd, but if all had been relatives the welcome could have been no warmer nor the happiness surer than showed in every face. Young Captain Murrell was the hero of the hour.

Old ocean, the hereditary enemy, the thing men instinctively fear, had been baffled; these had been snatched from his very grasp; all hearts leaped with delight at his defeat.

We took a train at 7:30 for New York, arrived there at 9:30, and between us furnished to the *Herald* nearly a page of copy. Having stayed to see this made up, about three o'clock in the morning, I boarded a train on the Brooklyn

Elevated Railroad, bound for home. I was fully aware that a reaction after these amusements was imminent and therefore contracted with a guard that for certain substantial considerations, being cash in hand, he was to awaken me at the Nostrand Avenue station, where I was to alight. The obligation must have seemed slight to him, for when I awoke I had been carried too far by nearly two miles. I reached home a little before five o'clock and fell asleep in my clothes, thus concluding Monday night. Except for the time I dozed on the "L" train I had been without sleep for sixty-five hours and of the last ninety hours had slept but six.

A great marine painter celebrated the escape of the Danmark's passengers in a famous picture that bears the significant and appropriate title:

"And Not a Soul Was Lost."

IX

THE ROCKY ROAD TO JOHNSTOWN

THE New York police parade of 1889 fell upon Friday, May 31. It was an annual event and we held among us a doctrine that to make of an annual event a story fresh and new was a test of workmanship. About ten o'clock that night I was putting the dash mark at the end of a story about the parade that I believed to be a morceau of great excellence and fully responding to the requirements of the test when the night editor spread before my eyes a bulletin telegram from Latrobe, Pennsylvania. It was to the effect that a dam had burst at Johnstown, a few miles above Latrobe, and at least twelve persons had lost their lives. I receipted for the emergency fund of one hundred dollars, kept in the office for such purposes, and started cheerfully for Johnstown by way of the Cortlandt Street ferry. In those days the *Herald* occupied its old building at Broadway and Ann Street.

At Cortlandt Street I bought a ticket to Johnstown, learned that the train would leave at fifteen minutes past midnight, bought a lower berth on the sleeping car, and having more than an hour on my hands sauntered back to the *Herald* office. My baggage consisted of an umbrella and a light overcoat—the umbrella mine own and having a silver handle of artistic merit; the overcoat the property of one of my fellows. He had purchased it the day before and it was the pride of his young life. I remember it

had broad facings of watered silk (which were then the fashion) and the color was a delicate blue of the shade known, I believe, as robin's egg. He had lent it under protest, but as I knew I should be coming back the next night I felt that he could and ought to forego its glories for one day.

At the office I found that successive bulletins had increased the probable loss of life to twenty and finally to forty. These additions I recognized as the usual embroidery of the bulletin writer. Odd, I said, how the country correspondent always loses his head in the presence of a story. Such things as forty fatalities in a dam-burst do not happen. I see a night of rest in my lower berth, a column story filed early, and back to-morrow night.

But when I returned to the ferry house I was somewhat dismayed and ruffled to find that there would be no sleeping car to Johnstown and that the 12:15 train would run no farther than Philadelphia because the tracks were under water at Harrisburg. But there was a " newspaper train " from Philadelphia on, a contrivance with one day coach that would certainly get through, and with this I could easily connect.

By this time there were four of us, each representing a New York newspaper. As the 12:15 would reach Philadelphia about three o'clock to go to bed was not worth while so we sat in the smoking car. At Philadelphia we made a hasty luncheon of sandwiches and got away on the newspaper train, which proved to be all that was said of it and more. The last three miles of its journey to Harrisburg it proceeded through a vast lake with the water but an inch below the fire box and the terrified passengers convinced that the rocking train was about to leave the invisible tracks.

That was about eight o'clock in the morning, and at Harrisburg the train stopped; neither was there another that would take us farther. The operation of the road had come to an abrupt halt. For seven days the Alleghany mountain region had been flooded from cyclones, cloudbursts, and phenomenal rainfalls. Every creek had become a river and every river a flood. The culmination of these disasters had fallen the day before in a final terrific storm through the mountains. Miles upon miles of track had been washed away, cuttings filled, bridges and trestles smashed to pieces and swept down, towns inundated, stations destroyed. No trains would move westward from Harrisburg for days, perhaps even for weeks. At first these statements of the railroad officers seemed to us preposterous; a few moments of rapid investigation showed that they were only too well founded.

Meantime, how about the flood at Johnstown? You will readily understand our plight; we must move forward if only on foot. We had been sent to Johnstown: to Johnstown accordingly we go. This blockade is only on the Pennsylvania Railroad. About one hundred miles to the south the Pennsylvania is paralleled by the Baltimore & Ohio. Now the Baltimore & Ohio has also a branch line to Johnstown, I saw it in the guide when I was looking up time-tables, and the Baltimore & Ohio is out of the storm belt. If we had only taken the Baltimore & Ohio in the first place! But here is a little cross-country line running south from Harrisburg called the Cumberland Valley. It strikes the Baltimore & Ohio at a place called Martinsburg, West Virginia. What more could be desired? Here is a train on the Cumberland Valley that will start in five minutes for Martinsburg. So we jump aboard and head off to the south.

At Hagerstown, Maryland, eighteen miles from Martinsburg, at eleven o'clock the train comes to a stop. We are told it will not go any farther. There is a bridge across the Potomac River about half-way between Hagerstown and Martinsburg and that bridge has been so shaken and battered by flood and freshets that the superintendent, who is with us, dares not allow the train to risk the crossing of it. But there is a wrecking car going on in a few minutes and we can ride on that as far as the bridge if we like. Then we can walk the bridge and get a farmer on the other side to drive us to Martinsburg.

It is not encouraging news but we make the best of a situation undeniably grave; for again how about that flood in Johnstown? We ride on the wrecking car. It proves to be a derrick without springs or seats. We stand and might count every rail joint as we bounce along. Arrived at the bridge we see at a glance why the train could not cross it. The thing is six inches askew, knocked so by the flood and the wreckage that the flood bears. The rails are already twisted out of shape and in the center the structure seems hanging by no support that one would care to trust. Below it shoots the yellow flood, a mile wide. Every few minutes something it carries with it, an uprooted tree, a flatboat, and once a farmer's barn, strikes the bridge and it shakes visibly.

I had small taste for the crossing of that bridge and yet the thing had to be done. There was no superstructure of any kind; it was, in fact, no more than a trestle and unprotected. Between the rails of the one track planks were laid singly and end to end. A few inches under them, it seemed, was the foaming river, visible between the ties. Upon the rather absurd manner of our crossing I have since reflected with some amusement. The main

thing, we are told, is that a man shall keep his eyes from the shooting water, lest it bewilder him and he lose his footing. Therefore, upon advice, the first man takes between his teeth a long cigar, upon the end of which he fastens his gaze; the second man looks steadfastly at the first man's heels, and so on. Thus moving, spaced at about equal distances, we get across. Twenty-five minutes later the whole bridge goes out, swept away by the torrent.

We wait for no news of it but strike for a farmer's house about a mile down the road. He gives us a dinner (when it is cooked) of corn pone, salt pork, and potatoes, and then, with maddening deliberation, puts his team into his wagon to take us to Martinsburg. About two o'clock we start. The roads are bad, the rain squalls frequent, the farmer imperturbably fixed upon a deliberate advance, and it is nearly six o'clock when we see the roofs of Martinsburg. At the sight of the railroad station we leap away from the astonished farmer and scramble up the steps to the ticket office, there to be met with the final disaster of that unlucky day. Sixty miles of the Baltimore & Ohio track are now under water, and no train can run west for many days.

Sure of it? Absolutely. The train dispatcher has the telegrams. We stand and mentally kick ourselves for ever leaving Harrisburg. From Harrisburg there is still another way, northward first by Williamsport, then west to Pittsburg, then back to Johnstown. If we were back in Harrisburg we should try that; it must be open. Evidently the wise thing is to go back to the Potomac bridge, cross it, get up to Hagerstown, hire an engine, and return to Harrisburg.

"You can't do that, either," says the sympathetic train

dispatcher. "That bridge has gone down now and you can't get across."

"No way?"

"Absolutely none. No skiff could possibly get across that current and I don't suppose you could swim it. You're not alone in your trouble. The superintendent of the Cumberland Valley is here and he wants to get out worse than you do, and can't do it."

We stand and stare at the man in silence. Then I say:

"We seem to be cast away on an island. I will wire the *Herald* that I have made a hash of this thing and they must send someone else to cover the flood."

"You can't do that either," said the train dispatcher. "The last wire went down more than an hour ago. You can't telegraph from here in any direction."

It was now dark and we sat down morosely to a bad dinner in the little hotel. The Cumberland Valley superintendent sat with us. He looked us over and I think he took pity on us. We were despairingly studying maps and time-tables, and had decided that our only chance of rescue was to drive that night about forty miles to another line of railroad and get a train for Richmond, Virginia—a feat ridiculous enough to make us an enduring jest to the whole newspaper trade. Four of us started for Johnstown, Pennsylvania, due west three hundred and seventy miles and we brought up in Richmond, Virginia, four hundred miles due south. The idea fills us with sardonic mirth. Here's reporting for you! But at this point the superintendent said:

"Well, don't hire your horses just yet, anyway. I'm going to get out of this trap. Let's see first what we can do without going around Robin Hood's barn."

He took us back to the railroad station, where we passed dreary hours of waiting while he sought diligently for the

information he needed. About twelve miles below Martinsburg was another line of railroad crossing the Potomac on another bridge and also making Hagerstown. As the wires were down he could not discover whether this bridge still stood. If it stood his plan was to take an engine on the Baltimore & Ohio, run down to the junction point, risk an imperiled Y, get upon the cross-line, and so over to Hagerstown. Some time after midnight he learned that the bridge still stood, and the Baltimore & Ohio officers promised him an engine from its roundhouse at daybreak.

We caught a little sleep in our chairs and at daybreak we started. There was no certainty that the bridge would be standing by the time we reached it. By good fortune it was, and at eleven o'clock that morning we stood once more upon the station platform at Hagerstown and in time to board a train for Harrisburg.

On the way we unfolded to the sympathetic superintendent our plan of moving by the way of Williamsport and the long detour north. He strongly advised against it. He said:

"I know all this country well. You would be days getting through by that route. Let me tell you something. The only way to get to Johnstown now is to drive there from Chambersburg, a station half-way between Hagerstown and Harrisburg. Telegraph ahead for your teams (I'll give you the names, I know everybody in those towns), have them waiting for you, and you will have no trouble. It's one hundred and twenty-five miles and you have two ranges of mountains to cross, the Blue Ridge and the Alleghany, but it can be done and it is the only thing that can be done now."

"When do we get to this Chambersburg?" we asked.

"At two o'clock. We meet the down train there. And

let me tell you something else. I believe in playing fair and giving everybody a chance. That knot of Philadelphia reporters that you saw at the station platform at Harrisburg yesterday morning is there yet. I know some of them. They've been telegraphing me for advice. I've put them up to this same scheme. They are on their way to Chambersburg on the down train, and they'll get there about the same moment that you do. It will be a race. Well, I'm for that. Go in and may the best side win. You see I'm impartial."

"Lead us to a telegraph office," said we in reply. At the next station we wired for a carriage to meet us at Chambersburg. When the train pulled in we were hanging upon the car steps. At the same moment the down train was pulling in, we on the main track, the down train on a siding. This gave us about one-half minute's advantage. On the other side of the platform we could see three carriages waiting. So the Philadelphia reporters had evidently telegraphed ahead as much as we. Before the train had fairly stopped we were running across the platform.

"In here, boys!" shouted the cleverest of us, holding open a carriage door. His good quick eye had scanned the three carriages and infallibly selected the lightest. As we went up the hill back of Chambersburg we could see our competitors lumbering out of town in an ancient family coach.

At seven o'clock we came to McConnellsburg, the end of the first stage. Philadelphia was nowhere in sight; not even a whiff of dust far down the road betrayed the coming of the enemy, and it was with minds content that we ate a hurried supper and went forth to the waiting carriages. One was a two-seated side-bar, light as a feather; the other two were Noah's arks on wheels. We made for the sidebar.

The driver (who was also the owner) viewed us with suspicion. He said:

"This team is engaged for Mr. Brown."

"Right!" said Wardman of the *Tribune,* our clever boy. "I'm Mr. Brown."

"But I heard these gentlemen call you something else," said the driver, unconvinced. "At the hotel they called you Wardman."

"Oh, that was for short—nickname, you know. Jump in, jump in!"

"I thought there were only three in your party," said the driver, still holding back.

"Four, my dear man," said Wardman. "Just look at your telegram. I'm sure it says four. Come on—we're all ready."

"I don't see how we can manage three on that back seat," the driver grumbled. "It's too narrow. This machine was only built for four persons, you know."

"My dear man," said Wardman, "the easiest thing in the world. Look here—plenty of room, you see. Let's start—we're all right."

So we get under way, the driver still dissatisfied. Doubtless he has good reasons but still inferior to ours that sit upon the back seat. This back seat was designed for two persons and those not of too much girth. To carry three, the third must stand with one foot on the step by the side of the carriage. Yet the machine is very light, the horses are strong and fleet, and we go swiftly and well. There is still light in the western sky when we come to Harrisonville, our first place of trouble. The bridge at Harrisonville has gone out. The nearest remaining bridge is three miles up the stream. We examine the banks where we stand. They are fairly steep but not more than six feet high and

the stream at the bottom, although swift and swollen, is not unfordable. We take the horses out and the protesting driver, riding on the back of one, gets them across. Then we turn the side-bar around and back it carefully down the banks until it stands in the middle of the stream with the water not much above the hubs. Then we crawl out to it, pass a trace around the rear axle, get to shore on the other side, and with all hands on the trace drag the side-bar up the opposite bank, put the horses in, and roll away again. And if it grieves us to think that Philadelphia in the Noah's Ark must drive three miles up the stream and three miles back we manage to master our sorrow and look the inevitable squarely in the face.

Now we begin to ascend and hour after hour the road winds upward in the dark. There is no moon and plenty of rain in the clouds. At times the driver desires to stop that his horses may rest. At such times we alight and walk. By one o'clock in the morning we reach the summit of the mountains and begin to descend on the other side. An hour later the driver pulls up in front of what he says is the farm house of a Pennsylvania Dutchman.

" This is Ray's Hill," he says, " and as far as I can take you. From here on down to the Juniata River the road is all washed out. We'll wake up the Dutchman, who is a friend of mine, and he or one of his sons will guide you down to the river with lanterns. You'd break your necks in the dark. One of you go to the door and knock."

I can vaguely discern the outlines of a fence and a gate. Through this I pass to a gravel walk, advancing on which to the accompaniment of a pack of awakened dogs I come to a door upon which I begin to hammer with my fists; the dogs meantime, according to my best calculations, about to break loose upon me, and I hate dogs. After a time

I am aware of the opening of a window above me. I look up and in a faint light shining from the interior I can see the form of a man holding a gun. He contemplates me in silence.

"Good-evening," I say in my most ingratiating manner, "we are travelers bound to Johnstown, and the road's washed out. We are sorry to disturb you, but we are in a fix and we need some help."

I had managed to forget the name of the driver.

The man above me made no response but still looked steadily down upon me.

"May we put up our horses here," I go on after a pause, "and get a lantern so we can walk down to the river?"

No response from above and I confess that at this stage of the proceedings I began to get nervous. I could make out that the man never took his eyes from me.

"Good-evening, sir!" I yell. "Can you hear me? We want to get some help."

Silence follows as before and then, in a slow, thick voice:

"Where you say you come from?"

"From New York."

Silence again, and then:

"Huh. From New York. Be you armed?"

I said we were not, but were merely poor travelers trying to get to Johnstown. Presently the window above closed and after a time a thin sword of light flashed under the door, there was the sound of slipping bolts and of a falling chain, and the door opened upon an old man with long white hair and two stalwart youths—all armed with guns. In the rear huddled some women.

"Now," said the old man, "you come into the light here, and let's see if you're from New York."

So I advanced into the lamp light and the three looked me over.

"I guess that's all right," said the old man at last. "You don't look like one of them bandits. Now what do you want here?"

I told him my story and by this the name of the driver came back to me. At the mention of it, one of the young men lighted a lantern and went hurriedly out of the front door, while the women folk made a simultaneous movement to the rear and I could hear the rattle of dishes. In a few moments my companions were brought in and the women appeared with cuts of pie, slices of cheese, and eventually hot coffee. I have never been among better people. They cheerfully put the horses up, and both of the sons insisted upon going with us to the Juniata. The old man apologized for the incivility of his reception.

"This is a lonely place," he said, "and the farmers often get robbed. We must protect ourselves."

He fell presently into a brown study while we ate.

"What did you say you were going to Johnstown for?" he said after a time.

I explained again that each of us represented a New York newspaper, one the *Tribune*, another the *Times*, another the *World*, and I the *Herald*, and that we were going to Johnstown to report the great disaster for our journals. He considered this for some time. At last he looked up and said:

"It ain't no use. You better stay here with us. It ain't no use you going to Johnstown."

"Why not?" said I.

"Why," he said, "the flood sweep that town so there ain't no printing press left in it. No, sir, I tell you it ain't no use."

We had reason to thank the two stalwart sons and their lanterns before we got to the river. The road had been washed out all the way. Where had been road now ran a creek at the bottom of a gully and we must make the two miles clinging to the banks. One young man with a lantern led the way, the other brought up the rear. At half-past three we reached the Juniata. The crazy old wooden bridge hung by the ends, for the middle pier had been washed away, and at the center the structure sagged perilously downward. The sons took us across with their lanterns—which was a mercy, for some of the planks were missing. At the other end stood the fresh teams. We picked the lightest carriage and with the road growing plain in the dawning light, we bowled away again, past Bedford Springs with its hotels, on to Everett where we changed conveyances again, and so pressed on.

Of the last and by far the hardest stage of that journey my recollections are not of the clearest. I remember drinking immoderately of coffee at a strange little wayside inn, for we were now worn out and craving stimulants, and I remember how the proprietor of the inn and I enlightened each other about cigars. I called for some after breakfast, for our stock of tobacco was exhausted. The landlord appeared with two boxes of the longest cigars I had ever seen, and not knowing that we were in the heart of the Pennsylvania tobacco region I was much astonished.

"These," he said (indicating), "are twofers and these are threefers."

I took two of the twofers and laid down a quarter. He fished up two dimes and held them toward me.

"What's this?" said I.

"You took two twofers and give me a quarter. Well, here's your change. No, we don't have no call for them

nickel cigars. But let me tell you, young fellow, there ain't no better cigars in Pennsylvany than what you've got right there now."

From this place the road went upward steadily. About nine o'clock rain began to fall again. At intervals we must get out and walk. Alas for the overcoat of robin's egg blue! Long before this it had become a sight to touch any heart. And the silk umbrella with the chased silver handle of artistic design—long since that had vanished from my sight, I know not how. Yet I was far from being the most pitiable member of our company. One of us, I regret to say, on that Friday evening that somehow seemed already very far off had been engaged upon some affair of moment, his specialty being statesmanship, and returning to the office had been unfeelingly commanded forth in a frock coat of faultless design and a pair of dainty patent leather shoes. This gorgeous garmenture (now caked and striped with mud) and his patent leather shoes, presently cut into ribbons, presented a spectacle so dismally in keeping with my own attire that I offered him the overcoat of robin's egg blue.

So many had been our disasters that we deemed we were under some hateful charm or evil spell, comparing our fate to that of the Flying Dutchman. As he had been doomed never to pass the Cape we had been doomed never to get to Johnstown. We had been dispatched thither on a Friday; Monday morning found us struggling up a boggy road in Pennsylvania, still far from our goal after wanderings in four states. And now we said the harness was certain to give away or the wagon to break down; both of which events must presently have happened. I remember that a hame broke near the top of a hill and we violently borrowed one of a protesting farmer to take its place;

and I recall standing half-asleep in the midst of a pelting rain while with strings and bits of rope and wire the driver patched a broken support over one of the springs.

From the summit of the Alleghanies, which we reached about noon, two possible roads (the driver said) led to Johnstown. One was regular and well ordered, but roundabout and there was no certainty about its bridges. The other, not quite a road but more of a loggers' track, led straight down the mountain and was only half as long as the regular road. The question was, which did we wish to risk? He would not guarantee either, said this conscientious driver, but he could tell us one thing for a certainty. If we took the loggers' road we must walk most of the way. How much could we save? About two hours. Say no more. We are for the loggers' track.

Conscientious as the driver is, he has underestimated the walking requirements of that route; also his descriptive powers have fallen short of its horrors. By what stretch of the imagination it was ever called a road, I know not, but at least it was never constructed for vehicles that have wheels. From the summit to the bottom we walk where we do not slide, or jump, or where it is not necessary that with our united strength we should assist the wagon down the trail, which leads three-quarters of the way over jagged rocks and the rest by bogs and quagmires. Meantime the rain falls without ceasing; cold on the summit, with fierce gusts of wind, and at the bottom a downpour that the cheerful member, with an expiring effort at mirth, likens in some trite jest to the Noachian flood and us to the drowning sinners therein.

Little we cared. My own head was singing, and overwrought nerves, sleeplessness, and worry wrought a curious transformation in the most peaceable and lovable of our

troop. I remember that he savagely resented even the brotherly offer of a cigar and that when at last we reached the first barrier erected outside of the ruined town, my usually placable friend tried to assault the policeman that halted us.

From all this condition we were presently aroused by the sight of the bare swept plain at the junction of two rivers where once had stood the greater part of Johnstown. In spite of spells, enchantments, and persistent ill-fortune we had won to port at last. At five minutes past two o'clock in the afternoon we drove up to the house on the hillside where a temporary government had been established. We had made from Chambersburg to Johnstown in exactly twenty-four hours—driving, walking, wading, and slipping. I am still of the impression that all things considered this showed a fair rate of speed and the diligence in performance of an assignment that in my time was always commended to beginners.

We were wet to the skin, covered with mud, and dog tired, but so strange are the ways of the human mind that every sense of discomfort vanished at the almost incredible news that awaited us. In spite of our wanderings, blunderings, and so many misadventures, we were the first reporters from the East to reach Johnstown. The Pittsburg men were there in force, but nobody had yet arrived from New York or Philadelphia.

Telegraph wires had been stretched across the hills, a shed on the hillside was turned into a telegraph office, operators were already at work, and we began to file copy. At half-past seven, going forth in search of food, we had the singular felicity of welcoming the Philadelphia men with whom we had raced from Chambersburg. We had beaten them by more than five hours.

Of the story of the great flood I need rehearse little here. The world has not forgotten how an association of eminent gentlemen maintained a dam across a river for the reasonable purpose of providing them with the sport of fishing; how at a time of widespread floods, this dam gave way; how the sea of water thus released rushed down the valley sweeping away everything in its path; and how seven towns and villages were thus without warning stricken with destruction. Johnstown, the largest of the seven, was built chiefly on flat land at the meeting of the rivers; and the flood hurled over this flat land the accumulated wreckage of the valley. Below the town the Pennsylvania Railroad had obstructed the channel with a stone bridge and the Cambria Iron Works with mountains of furnace slag. Against these obstructions gathered a vast raft of floating houses brought down by the flood; this raft now caught fire and hundreds of victims that had escaped drowning and were still imprisoned in their dwellings were burned to death, the sound of their shrieks being heard even above the roar of the waters. I hope, also, some memory still clings of the world's open-handed response to the emergency, the great relief fund that came from all parts of the earth, and the disposition made of that fund so that those that were rich might be richer and those that were poor might have but a pittance. If these things have faded from the minds of men, surely there has been lost one of the most extraordinary of stories: and one of the sharpest of lessons, also, one may say. For what could more reasonably move us to reflection than a great disaster that was caused by selfishness, profits, and greed and that greed turned then to its own advantage?

These things, I am sure, need no comment. But of some of my impressions I may properly speak. The first of

these was of the tremendous and (by me) previously unsuspected power of waters let loose. Where the raft of floating houses had burned was now a great black plain covered deeply with an amazing collection of the ruined works of man's hands. In the seven towns that contributed to this mass nearly all the buildings, including the stores, had been of wood, so that everything bought and sold in the valley had been floated to this spot and was now left bare for deliberate inspection. In one place you would note the remains of a crockery store, next to it of a hardware store; then a dry goods store; then a billiard saloon rested next to a church, may be, and what looked like a grocery store was mixed with a foundry. All these were massed together and only distinguishable by their heaps of partly destroyed contents, for everything above the ground floors had been burned over. I counted more than twenty pianos projecting from the strange conglomerate—the intimate household gods disjected ruthlessly before alien eyes. In one place were rolls of woolen cloth, still in order, and but partly burned, showing where had been a tailor shop of some pretensions; three barber's chairs stood upright and in due position while in front of each were moldering indications of a mirror, and below were shaving mugs and razors. But far more extraordinary than all this were the great boilers, iron smokestacks, parts of great machines, coils of wire, freight cars, railroad track with the ties still attached, and wreckage from the iron mills that were scattered all about. Between the upper limits of the town and the stone bridge were three locomotives, swept far from the tracks upon which they had been traveling when the flood overtook them and the very tracks vanished with the trains they had borne. Nothing seemed able to withstand a power so great; and looking with awe at these wonders we could begin to see

why the sites of so many towns were swept to their foundation stones, and could understand the death totals, the mounting figures of which were astounding the world.

Of the terrible things concealed in that black waste and how we saw them laid bare and often assisted in the discoveries, I shall not speak here, more than to say that probably nowhere outside of a battlefield and not always there would such sights assail one. The improvised morgues were quickly overcrowded; others of the remaining buildings on the hillside must be pressed into service; and the survivors that went searching from one black ruin to another soon became a heart-breaking spectacle. One may judge somewhat of the significance of the event when one remembers that the population of Johnstown had been about 15,000 and that more than 2,000 victims of the flood rest in the cemetery on the hillside. All the first estimates of the loss of life were strangely inadequate; an error that seldom happens in newspaper experience.

The first view of the place was assuredly the worst; the rain fell heavily, the site of the vanished part of the town was buried under two feet of sticky yellow mud, the black clouds hung to the hills, and before the temporary relief headquarters stood in the rain a long line of stricken survivors, waiting for food, perhaps four hundred of them, stretching far along in the mud. I could but notice how most of these were the new-made widows or orphans of underpaid workers in the iron mills and were now left without a roof or a crust or more rags than they stood in. The question of food was acute; only one grocery store had escaped the flood and when we reached it that afternoon it had been emptied of everything except clothes pins and mop-handles. Thousands of mouths to be fed, and at first was nothing to feed them with. Then the people in

the surrounding towns began to understand the situation and from all directions men trudged in bearing baskets of food. Housewives stood at their ovens day and night baking bread and men and boys waded muddy miles to carry it to the afflicted place. At first no railroad connection was to be had in any direction nearer than five miles. Rapidly the destroyed track to the west was replaced and generous Pittsburg took up the work of relief, sending in trains of supplies.

Our own situation was at first rather desperate. Our supper consisted of sandwiches we had brought with us from the other side of the mountains; for lodgings, since every house was already crowded with homeless survivors, we were in sore straits until we found a great barn that had been used for the steel company's horses and still had its lofts stuffed with hay and straw. An austere Bohemian gentleman whose knowledge of English was confined to a few numerals, was the possessor of the key to this haven. To him we must resort, shekels in hand. After admitting us it was his custom to relock the door and retire to his own slumbers, about half a mile distant. Inasmuch as there was but the one door, the place was a tinder-box and yet absolutely dark so that one must light matches to find one's way about, I am convinced that some very eminent journalists narrowly escaped incineration at the Hotel Boheme. Yet we arrived every night so wet and dead tired that we were grateful even for this savage shelter. We found that if we crawled into the straw as far as to our necks our wet bodies dried fairly well while we slept. There was no chance to remove any clothing; we dropped into the straw as we were, and by this time the robin's egg overcoat, which I wore all the time, was become of one even hue of western Pennsylvania mud.

A serious drawback to life at the Hotel Boheme was its oversupply of rats, whose inconsiderate habit was to run over our faces as we slept. One reporter, a later arrival, a sybaritic person that rode into Johnstown on a railroad train demanding a thick steak with baked potatoes, was sensitive about rats and made violent though ineffectual protest. Spurred to unwonted activity, he discovered another hostelry in the town, being in fact a brick kiln on the hillside, where one could lie on a plank above the burning bricks. Having been induced to partake once of this luxury, I am of the opinion that it is not to be commended, for the reason that while one side of your person is roasted the other freezes, and the combination does not foster that equable temper desirable for the fullest enjoyment of life.

As we went about our daily tasks the mud accumulated upon our clothing until we were from head to foot caked in it; whisps of hay and straw clung to us unnoticed; and our unshaven faces and unkempt locks must have given us a savage appearance. None of us had changed any article of his attire since he left New York. I know that when at last I was relieved, and just two weeks after I started from the *Herald* office I reached the Hotel Duquesne in Pittsburg, the head porter refused me admittance—an exclusion for which, catching a glimpse of myself in a glass, I could in no way blame him. Two of the reporters on that assignment died as a result of the hardships they endured, and I had more than one reason to remember the episode, for it was on this occasion that I made my first acquaintance with rheumatism, which clingeth closer than a brother.

I was not without compensation, nevertheless, for the experience brought me a singular piece of good fortune so entirely unmerited I feel moved to set it down at length.

After the first few days Johnstown swarmed with reporters and correspondents, for every important newspaper in the country was inspired to have its own man on the scene. The telegraph facilities were painfully inadequate, being a few wires led into an old cement shed on the hillside where a meager force of operators toiled day and night without rest at the steadily mounting piles of copy. The result was that many good stories were written but few got into print, a condition that was torturing many a managing editor in diverse regions of our fair land.

But from the first I landed my own stories in the *Herald* office with reasonable celerity and regularity, though the fact was purely fortuitous. The gentleman that then conducted the affairs of the Associated Press was unwittingly my benefactor in this. It happened that he was close to Johnstown when the flood came. Being on the ground he was able to supervise the telegraph facilities and he insisted upon a wire for himself to the Western Union building in New York City, and upon an operator for his exclusive use. This wire he led not into the old cement shed but into another old building at a considerable distance, where it was kept securely hidden, the great name and power of the Associated Press gaining an advantage that no single newspaper could possibly obtain.

Soon after it was installed the manager must have forgotten about its existence, for he did not use it, and the operator assigned to it had nothing to do. Being of great goodness of heart he told me about the existence of this wire and offered to put my matter through over it. I trust that in response I gave him enough to do.

This was all there was to it, but the fact that my matter was coming through all right began to attract some attention and comment. I did not deem my duty to include any

revelations about the secret wire, and, indeed, any such betrayal of confidence would have been ruinous to my friend the operator. Consequently it was assumed that I had won by some exercise of ingenuity or wit. After it was all over the New York *Recorder* (a journal long since deceased, but then of good standing) published a column article entitled "How Russell Got the Wire" which purported to show that by an ingenious system of relays and signals I was able to get my matter to another town and thus to have it telegraphed. I hardly need to say that this was pure fiction. There are doubtless excellent reasons why no man should ever accept unmerited praise, but to undeceive the *Recorder* was to betray one that had befriended and trusted me, and to betray him in a point vital to him; for if his part in the matter had been made public he would have lost his employment.

And here I am moved to set down a few plain facts upon the nature of my own activities that afford so excellent an illustration of the system under which we live. I was not, in truth, hired to be just nor to deal candidly; in one sense I was not even hired to lay before the public the facts of the great disaster at Johnstown. I was hired to outwit my fellow-workers, to surpass them in cunning and adroitness, to secure something they did not secure; by whatsoever means, I must do this, and having done it by whatsoever means, I had but done my allotted duty. I was to do this that the proprietor of the newspaper might have the exclusive sale of a merchantable commodity and thereby increase his profits, and for no other reason. In my time this transaction was covered by a glamor of tradition and romance, so that none of us that served perceived much of its real nature. To win a "beat" was to win professional fame and distinction; that way tended the am-

bition of every reporter. In later years the alluring fiction has been stripped from much of the operation; it has come to be regarded in its true aspect of commercialism; and if it seem now less attractive at least it is without pretense. We publish newspapers now to make money and not to serve God nor to benefit humanity nor to right wrongs.

Under the conditions the most I could do was to protest that the *Recorder's* account was untrue and the manner of the trick was quite simple and without merit. Nevertheless, I found myself elevated to a place in the Journalistic Academy. In the early days of my newspaper experience I had heard men speak respectfully of certain reporters as being of the "ten best" in New York. A little investigation and comparison would have shown that the number they had in mind was really larger than ten, but I have found that in these agreeable matters we are not prone to be too exacting. To be classed as "one of the ten best reporters in New York" was an honor that had always seemed to me too dazzling for attainment, and after the wire exploit when once I overheard myself so described (by a gentleman, it is true, far gone in his cups) the side of human nature that is all vanity overcrowed the other side that would seriously question the undiscoverable grounds of such a distinction. As Captain Nares, that eminent philosopher, once sagely remarked: "We are a queer kind of beast."

Such was this so-called success. I have since had occasion to wonder if, infinitesimal as it was, it did not represent a microcosm of the world, and if what we deem the great successes even of important men were not gained in a manner as little beyond their control. Nothing I myself have observed of such men and their actions would in any way conflict with such a theory.

X

THE MYSTERY THAT HAD NO ENDING

We had some grisly stories in New York that winter of 1890-91. The first was a rather remarkable case long known among us as "the Getty House suicide." On the last day of October an old man of respectable appearance entered the Getty House, a hotel at Yonkers, registered as George Smith, and retired. The next morning he was found dead in his bed from morphine, an emptied bottle of which lay on the dresser. He had burned some papers before he took the poison and had cut from his clothes and his hat band what were assumed to be the initials that might have identified him. Evidently then his name was not Smith and he had a reason for concealment. His appearance indicated that he had some station in life and the newspapers undertook eagerly the task of unraveling his mystery. Days of effort produced nothing; although the man's description was widely published and his body lay many days in the morgue it was never identified and the old man's secret, whatever it was, went to the grave with him.

Newspaper life in New York is a succession of events to-day of absorbing interest and to-morrow forcibly dispossessed from the mind by something else. The Getty House suicide was a good story so long as it lasted but it had already faded from our memories when it was recalled by a strange analogue. Soon after midnight on the morn-

ing of February 3, a young man entered the old Astor House, the last remaining downtown hotel in New York, registered as Fred Evans, London, and asked for a room. As he was without baggage he complied with a familiar regulation and paid in advance. The next morning his body was found dead on the floor of the room. Over the wash-bowl, which he had placed before the grate, he had cut his throat.

Here, too, it was evident that Fred Evans was an assumed name, for the young man, following the example of the old man at the Getty House, had burned papers and letters in the grate and had cut from his hat, his shirt, his collar, and even his cuffs, the initials that might lead to his identification. As he likewise was of respectable appearance and well dressed these facts and the coincidence aroused a lively interest and for several days "The Astor House suicide" had due attention from all of us. In this case as the other, none of us made any headway with it. The description of Fred Evans was widely published, the body lay the usual number of days in the morgue, and went thence to the Potter's Field with its story unrevealed, and "the Astor House suicide" took its place among the mysteries of New York.

The Astor House is about a mile from the lower end of Manhattan Island. The Getty House is fifteen miles north of it; the next mysterious story developed fifteen miles south of it. Tottenville is a quiet little town on the further side of Staten Island, facing the Arthur Kill, and beyond that, the coal port of Perth Amboy, New Jersey. In those days the Arthur Kill, because of its security and remoteness, was something of a winter harbor for coasting schooners. One of them from Kennebunkport, in Maine, was laid up that winter about three hundred yards below

the slip or landing place of the ferry that plies between Tottenville and Perth Amboy. The mate, a fine young Maine man of the Deer Island type, was left in charge.

On an afternoon in early March when the wind had been blowing hard all day and the white caps had been running in the little Kill this mate sat on the after rail smoking his pipe and looking at the water. Of a sudden there drifted into his vision in the very spot he was staring at the upturned face of a dead man.

You cannot easily startle the seafaring tribe of Maine. The mate sprang for a boat hook, made the body fast, and then went ashore and notified the local police. At the undertaker's shop to which the body was removed, even the Maine man no less than the police was astonished. With the mud washed from the clothing there lay before them the corpse of a man of extremely powerful build with his arms tied behind him at the wrists and again at the elbows with a stout cord skillfully and carefully knotted. He must have been in life handsome as well as athletic; the excellent and regular features were set off with a well-trimmed dark mustache, the eyes were blue, the teeth well kept and regular, the clothes of an excellent material although of a foreign cut.

Examining the teeth and holding the mouth open for that purpose one of the policemen uttered a sudden exclamation. The others looked where he pointed. Something white was in the mouth, a piece of white cloth. With some difficulty they pulled it out. It was a white handkerchief, one end of which had been thrust far down the man's throat. So plainly here was murder. The man's hands had been tied behind his back, the handkerchief had stifled his cries, he had been thrown into the water to drown.

But what for? Not for robbery, apparently. At least the gold watch and plated chain were there, the man's pockets had not been rifled, keys and trinkets were in them, his wallet and many papers seemed intact in the black frock coat. Not murder for robbery; yet murder, surely, for some other motive. What about the papers then? One was a German passport and quickly identified the dead man. Carl Emil Rüttinger, of Dresden, thirty-eight years old, it read. By occupation, a merchant; married. So it went, and the descriptive parts left no doubt that this corpse was Rüttinger. The other papers seemed chiefly to be fragments and memoranda, and an unused ticket on the Staten Island Railroad.

So the next morning we publish all these facts and inquire if anybody knows Carl Emil Rüttinger, of Dresden, merchant. Before noon there come to the undertaker's shop at Tottenville two men that we know well enough to be detectives from the staff of Inspector Byrnes. Anywhere we should know them, even if we had not seen them before; know them by their short-clipped mustaches and a certain mark they bear invisible to all except criminals and reporters; and know them also by an instinctive freemasonry that exists between their craft and ours. They have with them Mr. Gustave Neu, gray-mustached, well mannered, a German, keeper of a respectable boarding-house in East Fifty-eighth Street. He takes but one look at the body lying there in the back room and identifies it.

"That is the man," he says. "That is Rüttinger." Then he tells us this story:

Just before the first of the year, he says, one day, maybe a few days before New Year's Day, there came to his house this man, Carl Emil Rüttinger, and his brother-in-law, and requested board and lodging.

"His brother-in-law?" we ask in one breath. "Who was his brother-in-law? Also a German?"

No, it appears that his brother-in-law was not German. Rüttinger was a German that spoke English fluently, but the brother-in-law was an Englishman named George Wright. They had taken a room together and remained at his house until January 27 or 28—four weeks he should say, maybe five. Then they had told him they were going to Boston and had paid their bill and departed and he had seen neither of them again until here he saw Rüttinger lying dead.

"What kind of a person was this Wright? Tall, strong, powerfully built like his brother-in-law?"

No, it appeared that on the contrary Wright was almost conspicuously small and slender. He was young; not more than twenty-three, Mr. Neu should say; and he had rather wondered at the disparity in the ages of the two companions. Yet they were inseparable and the best of friends, though he recalled that they were apparently of very different temperaments. Rüttinger was cordial, sanguine, courteous, and made on all that met him a favorable impression; Wright so reserved that the boarders uttered small jests upon him as exhibiting national characteristics. Yet even Rüttinger had little to say about himself or his affairs. He told Mr. Neu that until lately he had been in the lace trade in Dresden, that he had failed there, and that he and his brother-in-law had newly come to America to look for an opening in business. Mr. Neu recalled that they had crossed on the Inman liner City of Chicago, traveling second-class. Every day, he said, the two went out, apparently to look for the business opening they wanted. When at last they had left his house Rüttinger had told Mr. Neu that they had found in Boston the opportunity they desired.

And since then he had heard nothing of them nor of either of them until this that you see before you, not one word. They had not written, they had not returned. Their fellow-boarders had heard nothing. He had made a point of asking that morning when he read of this in his newspaper. Nothing.

Where then is Wright? Upon that question evidently must turn the mystery. His companion murdered and he thus disappearing at about the same time—plainly the most suspicious circumstance. He is the murderer; he killed his companion and fled. We start at once upon the slender trail; Mr. Neu repeats with particularity all of his story; the boarders are found and interviewed; the police take up the search in every corner of the country. As fast as the mails can carry the information thousands of eyes in many communities are set at work searching for this young man. The singularity of the story attracts national attention and brings unusual help to the hunt. We have no picture of Wright but fortunately Mr. Neu and the boarders furnish a minute description. Age about 23, height about 5 feet 2 inches; slenderly built; complexion light, eyes light blue, hair a light sandy; features regular but small; head small, hands noticeably small; lips thin; very little color in the face; ears large and projecting somewhat from the head; of a shy and reserved manner and marked English accent when he speaks; would probably be noticed anywhere in this country because of his accent; clothes not distinctive; when he left the boarding house he wore a light brown suit of English make.

Within a week this description is in every police headquarters in the United States and Canada. In less than a week (as usually happens in such cases) zealous detectives and the rural police begin to discover the missing man and

from several newspaper offices in New York reporters are traveling to remote regions on promising clews. But they do not find Wright.

Meantime (to show the vast net of information that a modern newspaper can instantly pull to shore) correspondents and reporters of ours in Dresden and England set to work a few hours after the discovery of the body, picking up ends of the story. In Dresden they found that Rüttinger's account of himself to Mr. Neu was practically correct. He had been born in Stuttgart, where his mother still lived, but for some years he had been a lace merchant in Dresden. About 1888, while on a holiday tour in Italy, he met Miss Madge Wright, of Colmebeck, England, and almost on the spot he married her. They went to live in Dresden; Mrs. Rüttinger's young brother, George, lived with them. From the beginning it seems not to have been a happy household. After a year Mrs. Rüttinger quarreled with her husband and returned to her parents in England. Strange to say her brother sided with Rüttinger in the disagreement and continued to live with him after his sister had departed in dudgeon. Rüttinger's business went on but badly and in the fall of 1890 he was adjudged a bankrupt. About the second week in December he secured a passport in Dresden and with his brother-in-law started for America.

All this seemed perfectly clear, but the reports from England rather puzzled and disconcerted us. My own idea had been that Wright after the murder had made his way either to Canada or to England; I felt sure that the impulse of an Englishman of his type would be to get away from an alien country. Yet it appeared that there was no trace of him at or around his old home, the police in the seaports could not learn of his arrival, and so far as could

be judged his relatives had received no letter from him. About this there was something baffling and mysterious. The English reporters assigned to that end of the story did poor work on it, but even allowing for their incompetence the information seemed both strangely meager and out of joint. According to our correspondent Mrs. Rüttinger seemed not greatly distressed by the news of her husband's death and manifested little concern about the whereabouts of her brother, and for this strange fact (if it were a fact) no explanation was offered. But at least it seemed probable, after a few days of search, that Wright was not in England.

I concluded, therefore, that my first impression had been wrong. The young man might still be in hiding somewhere in the United States, and we renewed the active search for him here. In all he was discovered more than two hundred times all the way from Vineland, in the pathless wilds of southern New Jersey, to Medicine Hat in northwestern Canada. Every time a strange young man appeared anywhere the telegraph wires grew hot and Old Sleuth started upon the trail. I will give a specimen of one of these delightful incidents. Our correspondent in Concord, New Hampshire, wired us one night that Wright had been caught in a town in his state named Lisbon, if my memory serves me right. The fugitive had appeared at the hotel, registered under some such name as Thomas Caldwell, and was still loafing about the neighborhood. We promptly wired this correspondent, who was a good man, to keep cool and get all the definite information he could. In a few hours he responded with the news that the identification was perfect—age, height, complexion, eyes, ears, English accent. Moreover, he seemed to be very nervous, read the New York papers eagerly every day, and

was heard at night walking about his room and muttering to himself.

My city editor asked me if I thought there was anything in the information. I said I did not. I could give no very definite reason, but somehow it seemed highly improbable. To be on the safe side the city editor sent a man to Lisbon. He found that the suspected person was a traveling man for a Boston hardware house who was getting over a spree. He was forty-five years old, weighed more than two hundred pounds, and was bald as an egg. No man that ever ate fish chowder could possibly mistake his accent. It was pure Cape Cod.

This reminds me of an incident that suddenly projected itself upon this stage of the search to vary the drama with a touch of comedy not unworthy of an Elizabethan. Among the many newspapers that had taken a vivid interest in the story was one in Boston that I will call the *Daily Scream*. It was the policy of this valuable publication to turn up every day with what was known in Boston as a "shocker"—being something different from other papers and about four times louder. In the pursuit of this laudable purpose the *Scream* had taken up such of the Wrights as had been discovered in New England, and at last had succeeded in finding the man hiding in the woods back of Penobscot. Having made sure of its quarry the *Scream* naturally desired to make the most of its capable work. It therefore dispatched one of its young men to New York to see Police Inspector Byrnes and request him to send officers with the *Scream's* reporters and arrest the fugitive.

At that time the *Scream* and the New York *Herald* were bound by a news trading arrangement under which the *Herald* gave its proofs to the *Scream's* New York cor-

respondent and the *Scream* afforded the like facility to the *Herald's* Boston man. For this reason and possibly one of discretion also, the *Scream's* young man came to the *Herald* office and explained his errand before he should call upon the Inspector. At the *Herald* office, as I was in charge of the story, the young man was referred to me.

I had reason to know that Byrnes was deeply interested in the mystery, which was of the kind that appealed most to his extraordinary mind, and I also knew that he and some of his best men had quietly done much work upon it. He was one of the greatest detective geniuses that ever lived but had his own peculiarities, and among them was a violent prejudice against any interference with his work. I deemed it wisdom, therefore, to consult him before I produced the nice young man from Boston and from the Inspector's manner when he heard the news I judged that the nice young man was likely to have an interesting time that evening.

I made an engagement for eight o'clock and after dinner we went up to Byrnes's handsome house in West Fifty-eighth Street. The Inspector himself met us at the front door; in his shirt sleeves, as was his wont of an easy evening at home. Hardly waiting for my introduction he grasped the young man warmly by the hand and dragged him into the parlor.

"From the Boston *Scream*," he was saying. "I know that paper well, I know it well! Anything I can do at any time for that paper I am only too glad to do—any time, you know, my dear fellow, any time. Sit right down here before the fire and tell me what I can do for you. I know your paper well."

"Why, Mr. Inspector," began the young man, rather astonished by this cordial reception, "the editor of the

Scream has sent me to give you confidentially some important information."

Byrnes planted his chair directly in front of the young man, sat down in it, and regarded him with an expression of the utmost amiability.

"Good!" he said heartily. "Good! Now tell me all about it—tell me all about it. Don't be afraid—you can trust Russell here. Tell me all about it."

"Why, the fact is, Mr. Inspector," said the young man, "the *Scream* has found Wright."

"Yes?" said Byrnes, beaming paternally, "the *Scream* has found Wright. Good! And who is Wright?"

"Why, Wright, you know—Wright, the man that is wanted in the Rüttinger case."

"Ah, yes," said Byrnes, hitching his chair a little closer and looking at the young man with intense interest, "the man that is wanted in the—ah—what did you say was the name of the case?"

"Why, the Rüttinger case."

"Yes; and what is the—ah—Rüttinger case?"

"Why, that case on Staten Island, you know; that murder."

"Murder!" cried Byrnes, giving a violent start. "Murder! God bless my soul! I haven't heard about this. Tell me all about it. What did you say was the name of the case again?"

"Why, the Rüttinger case."

"Ah, yes. The Rüttinger case. Now you just tell me all about it." And he compelled that unfortunate youth to begin at the beginning and recite the whole story, while Byrnes sat there with an expression of rapt and child-like interest. As the young man concluded his narrative with an account of the discovery in the woods of Penobscot

Byrnes rose suddenly and grasped the young man by the hand.

"That is the most interesting story I have ever heard," he said, leading the youth rapidly to the front door. "I can't tell you how much I am obliged to you. And so well told, too. A most interesting story—most interesting. Tell your editor I am obliged to him and any time—any time, you know," and with that he got the young man outside the front door, which he promptly closed.

We walked in silence to the Elevated Railroad stairs. As we were going up the young man stopped and said:

"Do you know, I don't think Byrnes is half as big a man as he is cracked up to be?"

I said that was very likely and changed the subject. Coming down the front steps of the house I had glanced back and caught through the curtains a glimpse of the Inspector. He was standing before one of the really excellent paintings that adorned his walls, standing there looking at it, and on his big face there was the rare suspicion of a smile. Hence I concluded that possibly the chief point wherein the popular conception erred about Byrnes was in respect to his possession of a fund of sardonic humor.

He had already dug deeper into the case than any of the rest of us, and yet even he, as he told me long afterward, was bogged. There was one thing he wanted particularly to know about Wright and to that end he had two of his cleverest men out every night, trying to trail the youth from Mr. Neu's boarding house, and never succeeding.

Meanwhile, the rest of us turned to and fro the old material, hoping that something had been overlooked. Among these efforts we did not neglect the boarders, and here we came unexpectedly upon the most astonishing dis-

covery of all. One of the boarders chanced to change his room. A trunk stood against the wall. Moving it his eye fell upon a photograph that had slipped behind and fallen to the floor. He picked it up mechanically and was presently transfixed with wonder and interest. He had forgotten all about it, but now it came back to him. On a certain Sunday before Rüttinger and Wright had gone to Boston they had been in his room, and Wright had shown him this photograph. It was of the old home in England, a neat English country house, on the lawn the family standing, and among them, his face turned squarely to the light and every feature clearly revealed, was Wright himself. The boarder remembered that after exhibiting the photograph Wright had laid it upon the trunk, where, no doubt, it had slipped unobserved to the floor.

The boarder was without employment on that day and he conceived his duty to lie in delivering the photograph with the utmost diligence to the District Attorney of Richmond County (Staten Island), who was supposed to be conducting an investigation of the case. A few hours later a group of us stood looking at the picture in the District Attorney's office. One was a bright young reporter from the *Evening World.* He examined the photograph closely for a moment, asked some casual questions, looked indifferently at the clock, and sauntered to the door.

"Going?" someone asked.

"Yep. I don't see much to-day. I guess I'll go down to Tottenville."

He lingered about for a space, shuffled listlessly around the corner out of sight, and then shot like a sprinter for the ferry. He would not even trust a telephone but went himself to his office. In another hour the *Evening World* was on the streets with the first exclusive news that had

developed in the story. For the young man had identified Wright as the Astor House suicide.

It was even so. Of the group of reporters that looked at that photograph that morning in the District Attorney's office the *Evening World* man alone had worked on the Astor House story but it was readily demonstrated that his quick eyes had not deceived him. We had the body of the Astor House suicide brought down from the Potter's Field and Mr. Neu and six of his boarders declared at once that it was the body of Wright. While the police of three countries had been searching for him in every nook and cranny his body lay cold in the Potter's Field.

Of all the strange features of this strange story, this was the strangest. Rüttinger murdered and Wright a suicide! How could that be? After murdering his friend and comrade did Wright in remorse kill himself? Or was the murder the work of other hands and Wright's death only a coincidence? Or had both been murdered? Or what was the answer to all this riddle?

One thing at least was clear: we must determine now what space of time elapsed between the murder and the suicide, if Wright, indeed, had killed himself. We set to work upon the question, and hopeless as it seemed, within three hours had it definitely determined. How? Why, in a way that seemed to us then too simple to mention but seems to me now rather a fair piece of deductive reasoning. Do you remember that among the contents of Rüttinger's pockets was a ticket on the Staten Island Railroad? That bit of water-soaked cardboard an inch and a half long became now our best possession. It was the unused half of a round-trip ticket from New York to Tottenville and return; someone had traveled to Tottenville but had not traveled back. It was numbered but not dated; the number,

of course, being one in a consecutive series. We found that these tickets were sold from a reel in the ticket office of the ferry house in New York and that to keep their records straight the clerks made an entry when they went on duty and when they departed, of the first number on the reel of unsold tickets. The clerks changed watch at seven o'clock in the evening. By looking back over the records we learned that the ticket found in Rüttinger's pocket, say No. 276,114, was sold on February 2, about eight o'clock in the evening. Naturally the clerk had no recollection of selling the ticket, but the record, as he showed, was indubitable. The number uppermost when he came on duty at seven o'clock that night was 276,063 and he usually sold about fifty tickets in the first hour of the evening watch.

An analysis had been made of the contents of Rüttinger's stomach, for some of us, being unable to account for the murder of so powerful a man as Rüttinger by a creature so puny as Wright, had surmised that drugs had been used. The analysis revealed no trace of drugs but showed a fact equally important to us though much more commonplace. The last meal eaten by Rüttinger had consisted of pickled herring, sausage, and potato salad. Now pickled herring, sausage, and potato salad were the stable menu of a free luncheon counter. Near the ferry house and on the route thither were several gaudy drinking places each with a free luncheon counter. We took a chance shot, interviewed the bar-tenders, and at last found one that remembered a visitor resembling Rüttinger. He remembered him for two reasons. The big man had a companion, the bar-tender said, a little weazened, white-faced youth, that talked like a cockney. Now the bar-tender was Irish and soon the sound of the unwelcome accent in his hall drew his notice and aroused his bitter mirth. The other reason was that both of the

visitors on the strength of one glass of beer ate of the free luncheon so much beyond the bounds of saloon etiquette that the bar-tender was moved to protest.

Here, then, were the facts plain enough. Rüttinger and Wright had gone to Tottenville together about eight o'clock in the evening, stopping on the way to get a free luncheon. Rüttinger had been killed; Wright had escaped. But what night was this? On the night of February 2. And when did Wright register at the Astor House as "Fred Evans, London"? About twelve o'clock on that same night. From Tottenville to the Astor House is close upon two hours if a man go straight. The last train left Tottenville at 10:40. The train on which Rüttinger and Wright assumably left New York arrived at Tottenville at 9:30. In one hour and ten minues, therefore, Rüttinger must have been bound, gagged, and thrown into the water and Wright must have started on his return to New York, where he promptly killed himself. This return he could have made only by way of the Staten Island Railroad. In the daytime there was the ferry to Perth Amboy, but this ceased to be operated at eight o'clock in the evening. It was rather disappointing that the conductor and brakeman of the train could not recall a passenger of Wright's description; but of the fact of the journey there could be no doubt. Yet observe where this left us. These two men, for a long time inseparable companions, start away in the evening for a remote and sleepy village of which they know nothing. On the way they stop to drink beer together. Two hours later one deliberately and coldly murders the other and then kills himself. The extreme improbability of any such thing revived in some of us the notion that other hands might have been concerned; that Rüttinger might have been lured to his death at Tottenville and Wright murdered in the Astor

House. An examination of Wright's room at the hotel made a quick ending of this supposition. The door had been found locked upon the inside and unless the murderer were a ghost capable of squeezing down a twelve-inch chimney flue there was no other means of ingress.

But how about this other part revealed by the bar-tender, this ravenous eating of the stale luncheon of a poor saloon? The last positive information we had of them showed Rüttinger and Wright paying their bill at a high-priced boarding house and departing for Boston. Three days later they turn up at a fourth-rate boozing ken eating voraciously of garbage. What did this mean and where had the men been in those three days?

About these matters we could get no light. Meantime the inquest on Rüttinger's body was called at Tottenville and we all went to the little hotel where it was held, disgusted with our failure and expecting only further defeat. To our infinite astonishment an entirely new chapter of the story turned up from an unexpected quarter. Among the witnesses was a man that most of us knew well enough but had never dreamed of as holding any part of this mystery. He was an old Englishman, the keeper of a lodging house or cheap hotel on the water front frequented exclusively, I think, by the poorest persons of his own nation—immigrants and the like. He came now to the stand and in the dullest way emitted the fact that he knew Rüttinger and Wright, that on January 29 (the day they left Mr. Neu's house) they had come to his place and taken a room together, and that Wright (moved, no doubt, by racial sympathy, to unbosom himself) had told him that they were in desperate straits for money. Wright said that all the money they had when they left Germany was gone, that they had been unable to find employment or a business

opening, and that he had no idea what they should do. The lodging-house keeper tried to cheer them up, telling them they need not doubt of finding employment and that meantime he would give them credit for their lodging. February 2, he said, they spent chiefly in their room, but about seven o'clock they went out and did not return and he had never seen either of them alive since, although it appeared that he had journeyed to Tottenville and privately identified the body of Rüttinger.

Neither Inspector Byrnes nor any of the reporters had any foreknowledge of this phase of the story, and it seemed strange that when so many inquiries were rife the lodging-house man should have concealed what he knew. Questioned on this point he said that in his country all such information was given solely to the coroner, and if such was not the custom in America it ought to be. Which may have been his real reason for silence or may not; I do not pretend to say.

But, anyway, assuming the man's testimony to be true, and no reason appeared to doubt it, here were all the missing links of time between the departure of Rüttinger and Wright from Mr. Neu's house up to midnight of February 2, when one was lying dead in the Arthur Kills and the other in the Astor House. They did not go to Boston; they went instead to a cheap lodging-house where they lived in destitution until they started for Tottenville.

Up to this point the story seemed clear and beyond this point we never got—at least with any evidence that could be called satisfactory. At the inquest on the body of Wright a very strange person named Perrin H. Sumner, who subsequently served a term in a state penitentiary, made an impudent attempt to identify the young man as one James H. Edgar and to use the pretended identification in some

vast scheme of fraud that he was then engineering or trying to engineer. As he had previously tried to establish the identity of the Getty House suicide as the father of James H. Edgar, this new chapter in his romance attracted great attention and for a time Sumner held the center of the stage. I have never known a proceeding more barefaced. Sumner, another man, and a peroxide lady took the stand and swore point blank that Wright was Edgar. So positive, direct, and circumstantial was their story that it might have been believed to the further and irremediable tangling of our work in hand if Sumner had not been overwhelmed in the nick of time with a complete revelation of his part in the fraud. The sole credit for this excellent piece of work belongs to my friend, Isaac D. White of the New York *World,* who, all in all, was the best reporter I have known.

Beyond the discovery that Rüttinger had been insured in a New York life insurance company and that the claim had been paid to his mother we made no further progress. But long afterward I came across an old number of an English weekly newspaper and turning it over idly I fell upon the story of an incident that somewhat resembled our mystery. A German army officer that had been ruined by gambling had attempted to cheat an insurance company for the benefit of his creditors by committing suicide in such a way that it would be thought he had been murdered. His hands had been so bound behind his back as to give him some use of them. He had then with a revolver shot himself by the side of a river and fallen in. The revelation came through the confession of his servant, who had been his accomplice.

I looked at the date of this paper and found it had been published not long before Rüttinger and Wright began their

voyage in the City of Chicago. It is a paper that goes regularly to the smoking rooms of Atlantic liners. I can only surmise that this copy fell under the eyes of these travelers and one or both read my item. It is quite possible, also, that suggestion played a certain part in the story. While they were at Mr. Neu's house Perrin H. Sumner in one of his gyrations had caused the story of the Getty House suicide to be revived and the newspapers recalled the case in which the aged man had removed from his clothing all possible chance of identification. Exactly the same precautions, it will be remembered, were taken by Wright before he killed himself at the Astor House.

For my own theory was that the case was a double-suicide. Few of my fellow-workers on the story agreed with me about this but to my mind the clew of the story in the English weekly, slight as it was, settled the question. Rüttinger and Wright determined to die and for some reason that cannot be even surmised they determined to die in this strange, weird fashion. The reasons that prompt men to do these things are not to be analyzed, but this is by no means the first case in my experience wherein men have been pleased to make their exits with all the arrangements complete for mystery or stage thunder. In this instance, a possibility of still another motive existed in Rüttinger's insurance policy, made out for the benefit of his mother. It had a suicide clause; that is, a clause by which the policy should become void if the insured committed suicide within a certain period of the date of the policy. This seemed to offer the hint of a reason to make the suicide take on the appearance of murder, after the manner of the German officer. But when I examined the policy at the office of the insurance company I found that at the time of Rüttinger's death the suicide clause was

several months expired. Possibly, of course, he did not know this, yet so stood the fact.

But if my theory be correct, certainly I have never in my experience encountered a figure more uncanny than that of young George Wright. Only a boy, he played in the tragedy a part from which I believe the most hardened criminal I have known would certainly shrink. Imagine these two friends and companions sitting all day in the wretched back room of the wretched lodging-house, planning suicide. At seven o'clock they start forth upon their errand, stopping for a glass of beer and luncheon. They then journey for half an hour on a ferry boat and an hour by train until they reach the spot they have selected. The village is quiet; the people are in their homes and the streets are deserted. They steal down the one short business street to the water. There is the narrow plank pier. They walk out to the end. Rüttinger is afraid that he will struggle in the cold water and the noise will attract attention. Wright binds his hands behind him. They are afraid that gurgling sounds will come from his throat. Wright thrusts his handkerchief into his friend's mouth and he falls from the plank into the water. Then Wright returns to the railroad station, waits for the 10:40 train, travels an hour by land, half an hour by water, goes straight up to the Astor House, and kills himself.

What were his thoughts on that long journey? He saw about him men and women that had life before them and he had only death close at his elbow now. He sat there in the railroad station, in the train, in the ferry boat, and saw all this and never wandered from his purpose and never showed to any man's notice the weight of his terrible secret. I know not the like of this thing in fiction or in fact. Suppose someone to speak to him on the journey; suppose the

conductor to say: " Tickets, please! " or a fellow-passenger to say: " Cold to-night, isn't it? " and you would think the man would shriek aloud and go mad. But for those two terrible hours he held his lonely way in silence until having registered in a bold, unshaking hand, he went coolly to his own death.

Grewsome, is it not? And yet no more grewsome than a thousand other things that actually happen and that no novelist would ever venture to use. How irrational, for instance, are these actions—if my theory be correct! How insane and foolish that men should so destroy themselves! How foolish all the precautions against identification, for why should the dead take thought of things like these?

I do not know, to be sure, that my theory is correct. Long afterward I happened to be spending an evening at Byrnes's house and reviewing these with other things, I was led to relate the supposition I have set down here, and to ask the famous policeman what he thought of it.

" Well," he said, pulling at his mustache, " such things have been known, my son; such things have been known."

I needed no other indorsement, for I knew what that meant. He was of about my way of thinking himself.

XI

THE CLINIC THAT WENT WRONG

At its regular space rate of eight dollars a column the New York *Herald* ordinarily compensated its reporters; but for exclusive news it paid twice as much.

Behind the convenient shoulder of this fact in economics I purpose to plead for the guild of reporters and the art of reporting, should censure befall for any part in this story not up to a professional code demanding at all times a bearing impassive and disinterested.

On a day in February, 1892, came forth at Police Headquarters a slip from the East Eighty-fourth Street station that was officially placed on view for the information of reporters and read as follows:

"To all: Look for Mrs. Blanche Reed and two daughters aged five and seven, missing two days from 786 East Eighty-ninth Street. Woman is about forty-two years old, medium height, slender, dark complexion, dark eyes. Wore black cloak trimmed with braid, a black fur boa, broad black hat with feather; children dressed nearly alike, dark blue cloaks, trimmed with black braid."

This was sent down to the *Herald* office, handed to me without comment, and constituted an assignment. No. 786 East Eighty-ninth Street proved to be a very decent apartment house, bright and clean, and of the grade usually occupied by fairly prosperous tradesmen. The Reeds lived in the third flat front. Ebenezer Reed, the husband and

father, I found to my astonishment was a street-car driver on the old Ninth Avenue line, far on the other side of the city. The circumstance struck me at once as so unusual that I made a mental note of it for investigation.

An intelligent young woman of Hungarian extraction, the wife of the janitor, from whom evidently she had learned the American language after the school of the East Side at the Bowery, met me at the front door and supplied the outlines of the story. Mrs. Reed and the two children had been missing since four o'clock on Monday afternoon, when they all walked out of the front door together and never returned. As for Reed he was not now at home, being at his work, so the flat was empty; but Reed would be home about eight that night, when he could tell me more. Could I see their flat? Sure, come this way.

The place consisted of five rooms, one small, the others fairly large for New York, furnished economically but in noticeably good taste. Some rather good engravings and photographs were on the walls, a little book-case stood in a corner; the tables were becomingly draped; the floors were tastefully carpeted; in the bedrooms the beds were neatly made; an old-maidish kind of precise order was visible everywhere; the place shone with a prim neatness.

What did Mrs. Reed take with her when she disappeared? Nothing, said the janitress, except them two kids and the clothes the three of them had on their backs. What—no satchel, valise, bundle? Not so much as a grip. Did she tell her husband anything about going? Not a word. Leave any letter or note anywhere about? Not a line. Say anything to anybody? Not a yip.

What kind of a man was Reed? Drink? Never. He was the kindest old man in the world, but what we might call soft, you know—simple; easy mark. Quarrel with his

wife? What! him? Go on, he couldn't quarrel with nobody, that man. For three years they had lived in that house and never a word from that old guy. Kind to the children? Always; why, say, that man just lived in them kids; you never see such a man. Go out at night? What! him? Well, you couldn't drag him out of this place with a truck. He just moseyed home from work at night and stayed there. Have any pals or companions, you know; good fellows and all that? What! him? Why, there wasn't no more of the bum about him than there is about that post. Everybody would say so that knew him. He was a good sort of old guy but she could tell me one thing: he was hoodooed by that wife of his. That was the fact about it.

Well, then, Mrs. Reed; how about Mrs. Reed? The janitress drew down the corners of her mouth as one that bites a lemon. She would tell me the truth: the old woman was an old cat. How? Bad? No; not that way, just proud and mean and sticky, a phrase that I found to be the equivalent for stuck-up. Have any visitors or callers? A few; mostly from the church; she was hot stuff in the church, all right. Have any lovers? What! her? That old cat? Well, she should say not. In her opinion the old cat would scare any man so he would run a block, she was that sour and disagreeable.

"So," said I when she had ended this rapid fire photography. "Now, tell us just what happened."

"Well, it was like this. You see, I was never really stuck much on this here Mrs. Reed but we never had no words, you understand. She looked down on all of us; she thought her place was over in Fifth Avenue somewhere, I guess. But last Friday, I think it was, she came into my room and says to me that she was tired of it all and was going to end it.

"'End what?' says I, like that. I didn't know anything to end.

"'End this life,' says she. 'I can't stand it no longer,' says she.

"'Rats!' says I. 'You've got the best husband in the world and the prettiest children, and a nice home, and what are you kicking about? What more do you want?'

"'Oh, you don't know what I suffer,' says she and she puts her hand up to her head like this. 'I can't stand it no more,' says she. 'Some day you will find the three of us dead,' says she. 'The river, I think it will be the river,' says she.

"'Get along,' says I like that, 'and don't give me no guff. The river? What've you got to do with the river?' says I. 'It's too cold for one thing. You just fix your mind on them children and your husband that is the best man in the world,' says I, 'and fix up things for them,' says I, 'and you won't have time to talk none about rivers, I tell you that,' says I.

"'You ain't got no sympathy,' says she. 'You don't know what I'm suffering,' says she, and hikes out.

"Well, maybe I ain't got no sympathy for old cats, but anyway I thought I had better tell my husband about it, because Sunday afternoon when she come in from church she did look that wild, so I told my husband what she had said, all about the river and the rest of that, and he just laughed and said he guessed the old lady must be practicing to go on the stage and he knew where there was a chance for her to get a star engagement. You can't faze my husband. He was born and brought up in New York.

"But, on Monday afternoon, about four o'clock, down comes the old cat with them two children, all dressed for the street. They went to the corner of the Avenue and

turned up that way and that was the last I see of them. I wouldn't have seen that but I was outside beating mats and had 'em in the corner of my eye as they went past."

"How did Mrs. Reed look? Excited?"

"Well, about as she always looked, hard enough to bite nails."

"What was the trouble she was talking about? What did she mean?"

"I don't know no more than that there copper boiler. She had everything the old man could give her so far as I could see. It wasn't anything to do with him, anyway. He just slaved for the family. Know what he done? He got up every morning at four o'clock and got his own breakfast and walked to Ninth Avenue and Fifty-eighth Street; walked to save car fare. I wouldn't 'a' done it for anybody. And every night he walked all the way home. And he carried something in his pocket for lunch so he wouldn't have to buy none. And he worked every day, Sunday and all, so as to get more money for that family. And he never spent a cent on himself.

Why—

that

man

don't

even

smoke!

What do you think about that? He told me he used to smoke before he got married, but he quit. What do you think of him for an easy mark? It's my belief that old woman had him hoodooed."

"Why did he live in Eighty-ninth Street away over there when his work was at Fifty-eighth Street and Ninth Avenue?" said I. "That is at least four miles from here."

"That was the old woman again. She was dead ashamed because her husband was a street-car driver. She didn't want anybody to know it. 'What does your husband do?' says I when she come to rent the flat. 'He's engaged in the transportation business,' says she, and him all the time a street-car driver. But he never told any lies about it himself. The rent was too big for a street-car driver to pay, he couldn't afford it. She wanted to live over here and wouldn't take nothing else. He told me that himself. There's her picture. Ain't she the stuck-up thing? Want to see the children's? They're in here—the old man's room."

She led me into the small rear room, meanly furnished. On a plain pine table were two frames, each holding the photograph of a little girl, remarkably pretty.

"Was he expecting something like this?" said I.

"Don't think he ever dreamed of it."

"How does he take it?"

"Well, he's one of them quiet men. He don't say much. But he ain't slept an hour since this thing happened. He works all day and then comes home and walks around most of the night. Where? Why, to police stations and up and down the streets, and wherever he thinks they might be. He ain't said much to anybody, but if there ever was a man all broke up about anything it's that old man Reed. It's my belief he's going daffy."

"Were the children fond of their father?"

"Cared more for him than they did for the old woman—seven times over."

"What do you think?"

"Well, I don't know—I guess the old cat's gone and done it. She looked wild enough. But don't you go and tell the old man. He'd go clean crazy. I ain't never told

him a word about what she said to me. I'd believe anything about that woman. And him as nice an old man as you ever see."

At first I could not understand why this man, said to be so sorely hurt, should continue at his work as if nothing had happened, but it appeared that he was practically penniless. His custom was to give all his wages, week by week, to his wife. "I told you she had him hoodooed," said the janitress. His controlling idea now was to hire detectives under the belief that his family had been kidnapped. He was already in communication with a firm of Hawkshaws and had grasped firmly the first idea they advanced to him, which was that their assistance was held at a high price. The only way he knew to get the money was to keep at his work.

Talks with other tenants of the flats confirmed much of the testimony of the janitress. None of them shared the janitress's extreme opinion of Mrs. Reed but none was partial to her; she had too plainly shown her conviction of their inferiority. I could find no one to whom she had talked as to the janitress about her troubles nor about suicide, but they seemed to think her capable of making away with herself and the children. "She looked that wild-eyed and fierce," as one lady phrased it, "I wouldn't be surprised myself at nothing she might have did." On one point all were agreed; the Reed family had dwelt, outwardly at least, in a state of peace and harmony that in a flat house amounted to a scandal. It could only be interpreted to mean a household wherein the woman had absolute sway and the man, to quote one that spoke to me authoritatively, "was just like a dish rag in her hands."

I learned the name of the church that Mrs. Reed had attended and trailed to his study the pastor thereof, an

anæmic young man of a spiritual type and far-away expression. He evidently desired to remain uncommunicative, a state of mind from which it was necessary to dislodge him. Of almost any given facts you can usually take certain views that are likely to have this effect upon the most reticent, if you express yourself with sufficient skill, and if the person to whom you are talking fancies that he is to be brought unpleasantly into what you are going to write. On this goad being diligently applied in the present instance the Rev. Anæmia awoke and expressed considerable interest in his surroundings, even to the extent of becoming one of the most valuable if reluctant witnesses I had yet discovered. For he knew the whole family history of the Reeds.

They had come from a little town in central New York State, a place I had once visited professionally and now recalled with horror as one of the deadliest and dullest of all inhabited regions. I will call it Saintsville, if that will convey any idea of the aggressive morality of its population. The woman had been at one time, following some reverses in the family fortunes, a rural school teacher; her father, now deceased, had kept the village hotel and in his employ her husband had been a hostler. At once after the marriage they had come to New York, apparently at a venture, and Reed had found employment as a street-car driver. That was all, said Anæmia; and indeed it was more than he imagined, for recalling the portrait of the woman and piecing together all I had heard of her, I surmised that, dead weary of the monotony of her horrible town and of her single state, which must have been of many years, she had planned the marriage, seized the hostler, and made off with him as the one desperate chance of escape.

How long had the clergyman known Mrs. Reed? Since she began to come to his church, three years ago. Had he ever seen anything strange or eccentric in her deportment? Oh, no; not at all. She seemed at times to be highly sensitive and impressionable, but nothing that one would call morbid. He had noticed the last time he saw her that she seemed much depressed and had sought to cheer her with Christian counsel. Would he deem her capable of a rash or violent deed; such as taking her own life, for instance? Oh, dear no; no indeed; he hoped not. What did he know about her husband? He never came to church, but was understood to be a very honest man. Of course he was only a common working person and one might say wholly without education or culture; but quite honest.

Reed was due to return to his deserted flat about eight o'clock and I was curious to see him. Meantime we undertook to trace the missing three from their home. In the streets of New York such a task is so difficult that it is seldom worth attempting. People are for the most part unobservant of one another; the human tides pour along the sidewalks and none notes whence they come nor whither they go. It has been proved many times that a person even of unusual appearance can step into the street throng and, barring the observation of acquaintances, can move for miles there as if one had the ancient "robe for to go invisible" of the Elizabethan theater.

Who had seen a woman in a black cloak leading two little girls in blue? They had started north from Eighty-ninth Street along the west side of Second Avenue. Shopkeepers or their clerks that might have known Mrs. Reed as a customer offered the likeliest chance. We went from store to store and by rare good fortune we actually got

traces of the trio as far north as Ninety-third Street. They were heading for the river; that was the indication.

This brought us close upon eight o'clock when Reed would return to his flat. I was waiting there when he came heavily in. From the talk of the janitress and the tenants I had been led to expect a man well advanced in years and was rather astonished to find that obviously he was under forty. Little observation sufficed to show that he was not of the types of which villains are made, nor roisterers. I have never seen a human figure more rustic and unsophisticated; the country was stamped on his face and revealed in every movement of his body and tone of his voice. He was rather tall, loosely and powerfully built, and stooped a little. His long and we thought rather strong face was cleanly shaven; his eyes were clear, blue, and without a suspicion of guile. I could readily understand why the janitress had said so much about his simple honesty; it seemed to be so marked upon him that the suspicions I had professionally entertained were in his presence only grotesque. He was shy, diffident, self-conscious, and probably oppressed with a sense of his deficiencies, for his scanty education was manifest as soon as he began to speak; but he was far from being unintelligent or uninteresting. He had a manner of native deference and gentleness rather attractive; and manly character looked unmistakably from his troubled eyes. For his grief was manifestly sincere, his anxiety painful to witness, and all in all I concluded that if he were in any way to blame for the disruption of his household and the loss of his children the fault could not have been premeditated.

I questioned him closely while he ate a little of the supper the janitor's wife had brought up to him, and so we sat

face to face until he started upon his wanderings, for he intended to spend this night also, or most of it, in tramping the streets. I could see that he was wearied almost to the physical limit of endurance and marveled at the strength of purpose that kept him still upon his feet.

His manner of answering my questions was brief, but for a man laboring under such a stress it was patient and even kindly. He professed to be unable to give any explanation of the mystery. Why should his wife leave home? He did not know. Was it possible she had gone, even without baggage, to visit relatives out of town? She had none; her father and mother were dead; she had been their only child. Then, to visit friends, perhaps? He had inquired of all the friends of whom he had any knowledge, personally here in the city and by telegraph to Saintsville. Any trace of her at the Grand Central Station or the ferries? No. Had she any reason of business or pleasure that should induce her to go away? None. Anything at home? None. She had been a good wife, the children had been dear and good; there had been no quarrel; not even a disagreement. Sure about that? Sure. Had he noticed that his wife had been flighty of late, or depressed or nervous? Well, it was true that she hadn't been saying much the last few days before she went away but he did not think that meant anything. What was his own idea of it? Well, taking everything together he thought she must have gone out to buy something and got lost, and that was why he was roving around so much at night, because he hoped to find her.

One question more: She had a key to the flat here and you had another? Yes. The door has a spring lock? Yes. Did she leave her key or take it? She left it hanging on the little nail by the inner side of the door.

"Hum," said I, and had hardly the courage to look at his face.

The next day most of the morning newspapers had stories of this unusual disappearance, giving about such an outline as I have given here. We returned to the case and having arranged for thorough inquiries at the railroad stations and ferries, sifted out such friends as Mrs. Reed had in the church. This proved unproductive, for none had illuminating knowledge of her; they had known her much as the pastor had known her. We next took up the trail upon Second Avenue and here developed a clew of startling importance. On a chance we talked with the keeper of the Second Avenue bridge and found that on Monday evening just at dusk he had seen a woman and two little girls walk upon the bridge, stand for some time near the center looking down upon the water, and then move toward the other end of the structure. Both the keeper and his assistant had remarked the circumstance. About the further end of the bridge in those days were untenanted piers and lonely streets. If one were bent upon suicide here was a convenient spot. I was the more inclined to this suggestion when I got to the Eighty-fourth Street station and found that the police were aware of the testimony of the bridge tender and were ready to accept the theory of suicide and give over the search.

"If you don't get them in three days' hunt you don't generally get them at all," was the philosophical conclusion of the desk sergeant.

When I called at Reed's flat that night I found him sitting before his little bare table in his own little room. He had in his hand a single sheet of writing paper on

which was printed in a scrawling baby hand letters I could make out to read like this:

Good bye papa
Tessie loves you.

"Where did you get that?" I asked, struck with a sudden suspicion.

"I found it in her picture story book here," and he indicated the space between the cover and the first page.

"When?"

"Just now. I was looking at her book and it dropped out."

"Why did you look at that book in particular?"

"Well, you see, that was the last book I give her and every night before she went to bed she used to come and crawl up into my lap and show me the pictures and she must have thought perhaps I'd look at it when she was gone."

We sat there in silence for a moment or two and then he turned his blue eyes on me and said:

"Did you hear anything for me to-day?"

So here was the point raised upon me that I had determined to avoid. I had heard something and I lacked the hardihood to tell him. It was miserably unprofessional, but what are you going to do? The code of professional ethics sternly forbade a man to be sentimental or moved about anything he saw. "Be exactly like a doctor at a clinic," one of the oldest and most respected of our reporters had repeatedly told me. "No matter what may happen, remember that. Be exactly like a doctor at a clinic—interested in the dissection but not moved by it. The moment you lose control of yourself you lose control

of your readers. Interested but not concerned—that is the only safe rule." I can say truthfully that I made conscientious endeavors to follow this rule, which I still believe to be good and true, but what are you going to do when before you sits a man like this? If he would make a fuss or declaim or denounce or even shed tears I think I could be faithful to the code. But to see a big man quivering under such a load and being so plainly crushed before your eyes, what are you going to do? said I to myself. Lie, I suppose; lie like a horse thief and get out of that door with celerity.

Anyway, I looked at his face and if I had any lingering intention of abiding by the ethics it fled from me. "Will you let me look again at your wife's photograph?" said I, catching at a bare chance and the only one I could think of.

He arose and fetched it from the other room. I studied well the face it showed. Thin, bitter lips clenched above an implacable jaw; bitter eyes looking forth without speculation; a face without tenderness, and if it spoke true, a soul with no more than surface feelings—it seemed to me that here was much selfishness, some capacity for passion, much that was aggressive and domineering, but if I could read aright no trace of the wild, dreamy, introspective and self-torturing endowment that you might reasonably expect in one likely to commit suicide. I put the photograph from me and on this hint alone I said:

"Mr. Reed, you are giving yourself needless worry and pain about this. Your wife and children are alive and you will hear from them again. I can't tell you how I know this, but I feel it and am sure of it."

Before I went to the office that night I made a final call at the flat house to be assured that no news had been received.

"Hey youse!" called out my friend from Hungary as I opened the street door. "That was a good turn you did the old man to-night. You cheered him up more than anything that's happened. He thinks you reporters are on the level anyway because you don't none of you touch * him and when you told him to-night you thought his kids was all right, it just cheered him right up. Now you jolly him again like that if you can and we'll get him to quit tramping around and get some sleep."

I stepped upstairs. The car driver had returned early from the streets that night. He was sitting before the table still holding that scrawled little note. I always carried about me a few sheets of tracing paper and he readily consented that I should take a tracing of the words, which I did for the benefit of our art department.

After the *Herald* had gone to press that night the boy from the editorial floor brought up a letter that the gentlemen in that dull region had in their usual fashion managed to delay, under the impression, no doubt, that it was something referring to the tariff or the constitution. It was handsomely written on embossed paper and read, as nearly as I can recall it, thus:

To the Editor of the *Herald:*

Dear Sir:—

That there may be no more publicity about the matter and that the *Herald* may cease to waste its energies upon a subject of so little importance to its readers, allow me to assure you that Mrs. Blanche Reed, formerly of No. 786 East Eighty-ninth Street, is alive and under the care of her friends.

The name signed to this document was the name of one of the best known women in New York, famed for philan-

*Meaning, ask him for money.

thropy, aggressive interest in civic reform, wealth, and a place in society. I will call her Mrs. Demillion, which is nothing like her name. Her address was correctly given and all things seemed to be in keeping, but I deemed the letter to be a hoax. Among the freaks in a great city is one with a mind that discovers pleasure in sending newspapers on false clews. This form of lunacy seldom fails to manifest itself when a mystery has lasted more than three days and I believed that I had here only a fresh specimen of its ferment. Nevertheless at two o'clock that afternoon with the letter in my pocket I arrived at the Demillion door.

A palpably upholstered English butler, a type with which I had a long-standing quarrel, regarded me with unconcealed hostility when he had learned my errand, but condescended to take up my card. When Mrs. Demillion came down I found myself confronted by a pale, languid person that from a height surveyed, apparently with disapproval, all things below.

"My letter to the editor of the *Herald* contains all I care to say," she observed icily. "I do not know why the *Herald* should concern itself further about the matter. Mrs. Reed is under my protection and will be well cared for."

"And the children?"

"The children are with her. They will be put at school."

"May I ask how you came to interest yourself in Mrs. Reed?"

"It is really a matter of no moment or interest, but her unfortunate situation was brought to my notice by friends that had learned of it. Mrs. Reed, you should understand, is a gentlewoman. She has education and refinement and her family, until it met with reverses, was one of wealth.

She contracted a mésalliance. She was most unhappy in her deplorable position and I was glad to be able to release her from it."

"Mésalliance?" said I. "How was that?"

"Why, she, a refined and educated gentlewoman, was married to a mere boor, a common workingman."

"Did you ever see him?"

"Mercy, no! But I had the case thoroughly investigated before I consented to assist Mrs. Reed. I found that her husband was simply impossible and perceiving the terrible situation in which she, as a gentlewoman, was placed, I undertook to release her from it."

"To leave her husband, without a word of parting, without warning or explanation?"

"I had nothing to do with that. It was entirely her own affair. Agents of our charitable society with whom she had talked brought her sad case to my attention. I agreed to help an unfortunate gentlewoman in distress. I have done so and shall continue to do so until, by congenial employment, she has become self-supporting."

"Do you know that this husband and father thus coldly abandoned without explanation, is walking the streets in intolerable pain, searching for his children? Do you know that he is likely to go mad unless his suspense can be relieved?"

She looked at me with some astonishment and I fancied a trace of confusion, but instantly regained her poise and said:

"I know nothing about it. I have no other knowledge of the case than I have given to you. But I know it has had a ridiculous amount of attention from the public press. I hope the matter may now be allowed to rest. We have done for Mrs. Reed what we could to relieve a genuine

case of distress and shall continue to aid her so long as she needs aid."

I saw I was making little headway by an appeal to her sympathy. I shifted ground and said:

"No doubt you have acted in accordance with the highest ideals of philanthropy. But the father really ought to be relieved of his anxiety, which would seem to be needless."

She considered of this for a moment and then said:

"Under no conditions will Mrs. Reed again see her husband. She is decided upon that. But as to relieving his mind, if you really think he is suffering, which seems to me improbable, I have no objection to your telling him that his wife and children are safe and in good hands. In my judgment persons of his order do not really suffer much. But if he has such concern about them as you say, he will doubtless be glad to learn that his children are to have advantages such as he could never give them. But as you can readily see I could never consent that he be informed of this address. Otherwise, I am willing that the *Herald* should do what it thinks best about the matter. Provided, of course, there shall be no more publicity."

"I will report your request to the city editor," said I, "who will doubtless give to it every consideration. And now, of course, I shall have to see Mrs. Reed."

I shot this at her in a matter-of-fact way, for I suspected it would be a difficult point to gain and I desired to take her off her guard.

She hesitated.

"As you can see," said I, "it will be the sure way, and in fact, the only way to end this publicity."

She surrendered at this; I could see she was in deadly terror lest her own name should figure unpleasantly in the

story, and without loss of time she wrote for me a note giving me permission to see Mrs. Blanche Reed and children.

"That is where she is at present," said she, indicating the address. "It's the crèche of our society. Yes, you will find her there now."

The rest of this story does not amount to much except as an example to the young and a warning against yielding to temptation. It was highly unprofessional; the newspaper does not employ reporters to create stories, nor to interfere with stories already made; least of all to go about assuming the rôles of philanthropy. Moreover, there was that rule about the clinic as the correct inspiration for a reporter's conduct; "be interested, but not concerned." But when a man has a face like Reed's and a note from his missing baby, and when the car barn was such a short distance away, you might expect trouble. Strange how temptations combine to throw a man when he once starts upon steps astray! It was wholly unprofessional, but one of us remembered that Superintendent Hilson of the street-car line was a good man and a friend, and slipped down there to see him. And this man explained some things to Mr. Hilson, so Mr. Hilson put a substitute at work in Reed's place when Reed came in from his next run. And then this man took Reed in tow and started uptown. Having found that his plans had a habit of going awry he did not tell Reed what was in hand; just towed him along toward the place appointed.

"You keep on the north side of this corner," the man said to Reed when they were near the address, "and wait for me. Don't go far away no matter what happens." Leaving him so the reporter made for the crèche, a bare and unattractive old residence, imperfectly transformed by the hand of philanthropy to its present uses. In a few

minutes Mrs. Reed came downstairs followed by the two girls. The reporter thought they did not seem to be particularly happy.

"Tessie," said he to the younger, and ignoring the mother's frigid stare, "do you remember this?" and he brought out the tracing of her scribbled note to her father.

She danced forward, shouting with delight and clapping her hands.

"What is all this?" demanded the mother sharply. The reporter put the paper into her hands. "Papa! Let's go home to papa!" shouted both of the children, pulling at her dress. "We want to go home to papa!"

Mrs. Reed smoothed out the paper and read it. You could see she was hard hit, although she was struggling with her miserable conception of the austere composure required of a perfect gentlewoman. The children were crying now and pulling her toward the door.

"Where is he?" said the woman softly. "Is he sorry?"

"Let's go home to papa!" piped the children. "Oh, mamma, let's go home to papa. We hate this old house. Let's go home!"

Well, man is a feeble creature and foolish. It was all absolutely unprofessional. Some things were said on both sides and the upshot was that the four marched out of the front door of the crèche and around the corner, and the last thing the reporter saw as he started for his office was the street-car driver with his two little girls in his arms and the mother hanging to his elbow.

The reporter got a column and three-quarters. It was an exclusive story. At sixteen dollars a column. And times were hard.

The next day he was sent to Georgia, I think it was, to investigate a land fraud. Some weeks passed before

he again happened to be in the neighborhood of the East Eighty-fourth police station. From sheer curiosity he went up to No. 786 East Eighty-ninth and rang the janitor's bell. Hungaria thrust through the opened door a face that smiled broadly.

"Hello!" says he, "how are the Reeds?"

"Skipped," says she succinctly.

"Where?"

"Oh, back to Saintsville, or whatever it is."

"When did they go?"

"Right after the old cat came back."

"What! All of them?"

"The whole gang with the old cat. Gee! but the old man was glad! And if there ever was a man that was hoodooed by his wife it was that there old man Reed."

That is all we ever knew of them. We never found out what vagary possessed the woman to talk to the janitress about suicide and the river. We never found out what induced her to walk up to Second Avenue bridge and look at the water, nor why she chose to leave home in a way so melodramatic. In this business you have very little call to determine why things happen. About all you can attend to competently is the happening.

XII

HOW HARRISON WAS NOMINATED AT MINNEAPOLIS IN 1892

In the four years of the Harrison administration the famous Coppinger case had arisen to reverse the position of some of the players at the Republican board. From any point of view it seems now a matter ridiculously small to make history, but, if I have observed with any tolerable accuracy, history is made chiefly by small things and small men. Coppinger was a major in the United States Army; he had married a daughter of Mr. Blaine. President Harrison, perhaps in grateful recognition of that timely cable message, had made Mr. Blaine his Secretary of State. Mrs. Blaine wished her son-in-law promoted. Mr. Harrison declined to advance him over the heads of officers that had not married daughters of the Secretary of State. Mrs. Blaine was a powerful and self-willed lady; she bitterly resented what she conceived to be a slight upon her family; the desire for revenge overtopped her repugnance to campaign publicity; and she thrust Mr. Blaine into the arena from which she had dragged him four years before.

I suppose the Secretary of State was nothing loath. He did not like Harrison and for many years he had been infected with the presidential fever, which, as is well known, never leaves its victim while the victim lives. How far Mr. Blaine's ambition really deluded him on this occasion was never quite clear to us nor whether he desired so much to be named himself as to make trouble for Harrison.

In reasonable moments he must have known perfectly well that the country that year was Democratic and there was scarcely a chance to elect any Republican, even himself. He must also have entertained grave doubts as to his ability to live through a campaign. For a long time his health had been bad and growing worse. His malady was incurable and he knew it. And yet it presently became clear to the political reporters, or some of them, that he was putting forth all his remaining power and influence to secure the nomination.

At first the country absolutely refused to believe this. It desired to think well of Mr. Blaine and Mr. Blaine was still Secretary of State in Mr. Harrison's cabinet; therefore if he were in any way seeking the nomination for himself he was betraying his chief. Experienced observers could not deny that Mr. Platt, who hated Mr. Harrison, was quietly setting up the pins for Blaine; but they could not think that this was with Blaine's sanction or knowledge. In the midst of the growing unrest Mr. Blaine came to New York. I had not seen him for more than a year and the change wrought upon him seemed very great and very sad. He had grown thinner and plainly weaker; his skin, always colorless, had taken on a deadly waxen pallor; he moved with difficulty from his car and as he walked slowly down the station platform his heels hammered the ground. It seemed to me that there was " in his eyes foreknowledge of death "; that he had a burdened and haunted look, indescribably pathetic. He sat in a carriage crossing the river and on the New York side drove to the Fifth Avenue Hotel—Mr. Platt's quarters. We followed him. At the hotel we were swept into one of the small dining rooms and after an hour's waiting Mr. Blaine came in. It was plainly a thing prearranged. Twenty or thirty reporters represent-

ing all the newspapers and news agencies in New York were gathered on one side of the table. Mr. Blaine advanced slowly and stood on the other side facing us. Under the electric chandelier the death-like pallor of his face was still more noticeable. He stood holding to the back of a chair. The room was perfectly silent; in the air was a something we all felt that was depressing and funereal. With a visible effort Mr. Blaine raised his eyes and looked at us. Then he said:

"Gentlemen, what can I do for you?"

I know well enough that all of us that in other days had seen this man there before us felt startled as if at a blow. The light had gone out of the eyes that had been so brilliant, the old musical ring was lost from the voice, all the old magnetic cordiality that had charmed so many men and swept so many from the moorings of faith and reason, all, all gone. Once he had been so trim and neat and well groomed; and now his hair hung dankly awry, his clothes sat loosely upon him, and in the place of the old jaunty self-possession here was a visible shrinking and trembling.

"Gentlemen, what can I do for you?"

Edward Riggs, of the *Sun,* as our spokesman, gently explained the interest that the newspapers felt in Mr. Blaine's visit to New York at a time so critical in political affairs. Mr. Blaine listened, I thought, as one who is simulating an interest. When Mr. Riggs made an end, Mr. Blaine in set phrases said that his visit to New York had no political significance. He had come to the city to consult his oculist and for no other purpose. He was not actively interested in politics, could not be, and never expected to be again.

"Then your visit," said someone, "has no possible re-

lation in any way to the National Convention nor to what may be done there?"

"None whatever," said Mr. Blaine.

Someone asked about his health.

"My health," said Mr. Blaine, passing a hand in a tired way over his forehead, "is very good indeed. I have had a little trouble with my eyes, but otherwise nothing."

That was all. The show was over; Mr. Blaine retired. Going up the stairs to Mr. Platt's rooms in the hotel I met a man that was coming down. I glanced at his face and recognized him as one that I had known well in Chicago, where he had borne confidential political relations to Mr. Joseph Medill, editor of the Chicago *Tribune*. Mr. Medill was and had been for years Mr. Blaine's closest friend and adviser in politics. The next morning I was able to announce to the readers of the *Herald* that Mr. Blaine was seriously a candidate for the Republican nomination. On the Saturday before the Convention met Mr. Blaine settled the controversy that followed this announcement by resigning his place in the cabinet and thus in the most effective way declaring his candidacy.

The Convention was held in Minneapolis. The Anti-Harrison forces through the country had been chiefly directed by Senator Wolcott of Colorado, assisted by Mr. Platt. Mr. Blaine's name had been kept judiciously in the background so long as he was in the cabinet; when he resigned no secret was made of the intention to nominate him. The Harrison campaign had been carried on almost exclusively by Federal office holders; the rank and file of the party never cared for the President; he was too cold, too remote, and too self-contained; there was no fire to be struck from that icicle. In many of the Northern states the office holders had been unable to keep the conventions

in line; there was an immense element of the disaffected that merely knew they did not want Harrison without clear notions as to whom they did want. In that respect it was the most peculiar Convention I have ever seen; but much of the vagueness resulted from the necessity of keeping the Blaine propaganda quiet so long as Blaine was in the cabinet. As the delegates came to town it was evident that three in five of the Northern men, that is the representatives of the states where the Republican candidate must needs look for votes, were against Harrison, and it was also evident that with generalship and management the Convention could be swung against him. The problem before the Blaine managers was to get all the disaffected elements in line, and then to do something else. To a certain extent the decision would lie with the Southern delegations, mostly Negroes. Many of these were for sale like cattle; being disfranchised at home, politics had no other interest or meaning for them. They came up to the Convention to get what they could for their votes and they did not care a straw for whom they voted so long as the terms were satisfactory.

No two Conventions of the same party were ever less alike than the Convention that nominated General Harrison in 1888 and the Republican Convention of 1892. Many of the actors were the same but the situation was now very different. A great change, entirely unremarked, had swept over business and politics. The manufacturers, or Protected Interests, were no longer in the saddle. Already the process of consolidation and combination had eliminated much competition and at the same time thrown the eventual power into the hands that financed the great combinations. Now the dominating influence in business and politics was no longer Manufacturing but Financial, and the Financial

Interests having determined to nominate and to elect Grover Cleveland, the Republican Convention was left to its own devices. The Convention of 1888 had been a battleground of Interests: the Convention of 1892 was a battleground of jealous and warring leaders, and I desire to show now how great was the change made by this difference.

Before long it was clear that the Blaine campaign was being muddled. Senator Wolcott, a man of excellent ability, made the common and in this instance the fatal error of overrating Mr. Platt's political skill. Everything was left to Platt's judgment, as the man most interested in Harrison's defeat, and Platt seemed never to know which way to turn. Like all New York politicians he had no knowledge nor conception of the inhabitants, the methods, or the ideas of the interior of the country. In his own organization to say "Mr. Platt wants this," was enough. I suppose he could hardly understand that the Westerners had a totally different manner of proceeding. As a rule the Western people had never been fond of the conspicuous or arbitrary boss. They did not care very much for imperial decrees. What they wanted was organization and enthusiasm. When they succeeeded in seeing Platt, which was not often, he always offended them and usually taught them to despise his little ideas and little methods. They were built on a different plan, much broader and more sturdy.

Beyond a doubt when the leaders of the Harrison opposition came to Minneapolis they had the situation in their grasp and in two days they had lost it. They let the Harrison men win delegate after delegate from under their noses. Mr. Platt could swing most of the New York delegation and Mr. Quay most of the Pennsylvania delegation and Mr. Wolcott many delegates from the West, but to these loyal followers the opposition never added a vote.

The Harrison men had the audacity, the skill, and the energy; and what was more important, they had the money. They went into the market and bought what was necessary. There has been but one other National Convention in our time wherein delegates were bought so openly and so generally. I put on the badge of a New York alternate and went one afternoon among the colored brethren, and on the mere supposition that I was close to Mr. Platt I had offers for several blocks of votes ranging from $100 to $300 a head. The thing was done on street corners as if it were as legitimate as buying apples.

I will give two examples of the Platt tactics. The Convention assembled and appointed the committee on credentials and adjourned. Many contests were to be decided by this committee and every contest would determine a certain number of votes for Blaine or for Harrison. Some of the contests were obscure and badly tangled: little was known of them. Half an hour after adjournment I was coming out of the New York headquarters when I met an old friend of mine, the editor of a Detroit newspaper and a staunch Republican, going in. He said in an excited way:

"Where's Platt?"

I said:

"I haven't the slightest idea, but he isn't here. I've been looking for him. No one seems to know where he is."

"Well, give us some help in this if you can," and he handed me a paper. It was a list of the contests before the credentials committee, with the names of the opposing delegates. "Michigan put a Blaine man on the committee," my friend went on, "and now he doesn't know in every case which of these contestants are Blaine men and which are for Harrison, so he doesn't know which to vote for. He has

asked in the committee as much as he dares and can't find out, so he has sent out for help. Now which is which?"

Naturally, I had no information on that subject, but I sent my friend to a place where I thought he might learn to his advantage. Nothing came of the search and the Michigan man (with others, no doubt, of Blaine sympathies) voted to seat Harrison delegates.

The other instance fell within the same day when we learned that Platt had divided the opposition strength by bringing out William McKinley as a third candidate. When that was known it was apparent to all men that the game was up, for the news, as was inevitable, decided all the hesitating delegates. It was the palpable confession of weakness, and they lost no time in climbing aboard the Harrison machine. Mr. Platt's last hope was to prevent a nomination on the first ballot, when it was believed the Harrison strength would go to pieces. Strange as it may seem I have reason to believe that Mr. Platt never knew within seventy-five votes how many delegates he had. The time for nominations came on, Mr. Wolcott in a speech of great force and feeling presented Mr. Blaine's name, Major McKinley was brought out, and Harrison won easily on the first ballot. Mr. Platt went home sore but no wiser, and those that used to attend his Sunday afternoon sessions at the Oriental Hotel by the seashore remember perfectly well that vision of him sulking in his tent. They also remember other things. Considering Mr. Platt's mental make-up it was impossible that he should not view with satisfaction the signs of Mr. Harrison's approaching defeat at the polls, and equally impossible that he should not reveal what he felt.

Emmons Blaine was at the Convention working for his father as four years before he had worked against him.

But the strange Blaine story was to have there still another and more tragic chapter. It was while he was in Minneapolis thus engaged that Emmons Blaine incurred the ptomaine poisoning that killed him. His brother Walker had died two years before. Except that he wore no beard and his hair was prematurely gray Emmons looked very much like his father in his father's prime. He had the like sallow skin and piercing eyes, a large and handsome face like his father's, the same magnetism in his manner. Another figure much more prominent in the politics of his day disappeared at the same time. James B. Husted, long speaker of the New York assembly, was a delegate at the Convention. He ate something that disagreed with him, and Chauncey Depew recommended a well known and simple old family medicine for stomach troubles, usually efficacious. But Mr. Husted's malady was far deeper than even he suspected and the next word we had of him he was dead. There was something rather fateful in his passing. In 1881 when Platt had followed Roscoe Conkling in resigning from the United States Senate and with Conkling was seeking re-election and vindication at Albany, it was chiefly Husted that utterly crushed Platt's hopes and weakened Conkling's chances. For it was Husted that stood on the famous step-ladder placed at the door of Platt's room in an Albany hotel; it was Husted that peered through the transom, and it was Husted that reported what he had seen. Strange chance that the man that had once brought Platt to political ruin should now die in his service! For at Minneapolis Husted was one of Platt's most devoted lieutenants.

Mr. Blaine's own and truly marvelous career went through similar transformations. At one time he was the leader of the Half Breeds, one of the fiercely warring factions

into which the Republican party was split after 1877. At another time he was the candidate of his party and forced even the hostile faction to bow to him. And again he appeared as a faction leader, but this time leading the remnant of the old faction that once he had bitterly opposed.

I have heard men say that the feud between the Half Breeds and Stalwarts that once rent the Republican party asunder began in the personal antagonisms and ambitions of Blaine and Conkling. Lately I read in a book that the beginning of the row was the National Convention of 1880. As a matter of fact its real origin was in the Southern policy of President Hayes. A large part of the South earnestly desired to disfranchise the Negroes and nullify the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the Constitution. So long as General Grant was President he, to a great measure, prevented this design by a policy of national supervision and by keeping bodies of troops scattered about the South. When Hayes became President he believed that the Southern States should be left to care for their own affairs in their own way and withdrew the last shadow of national interference. This split his party. The Stalwart wing, led by Roscoe Conkling and Oliver P. Morton, bitterly attacked the President's policy; what were called the Half Breeds, led by Blaine, supported it. The natural antipathy between Blaine and Conkling widened the division. It was not so much jealousy as an instinctive hatred.

The statement that when Blaine was the Republican candidate for President in 1884 he had the support of his party requires some qualification. Mr. Conkling had definitely and finally retired from politics and was diligently practicing law; but a certain group of his followers was still irreconcilable. While the campaign was in progress there appeared in the New York *World* a series of remark-

able letters attacking Blaine and analyzing his career. They were signed "A Stalwart Republican." The literary merit of these letters was unusual; the elevated and luminous style made men think of Junius; and much speculation arose as to their authorship. As all these matters now belong to a by-gone epoch, and have passed into history, it can do no harm to record the fact that the letters were written by Roscoe Conkling, who had become the *World's* chief counsel.

Mr. Blaine had great shrewdness and extraordinary endowments as a politician but one is obliged to admit that if his methods strongly attracted some men they as strongly repelled others. I once asked Frank Hatton why he felt such bitter personal animosity to Blaine and in answer he told me this anecdote.

In 1876 Hatton was the editor of the Burlington (Iowa) *Hawkeye*. He had never met Blaine and had no personal knowledge of him, but in the hot pre-convention campaign of that year, merely from preference and conviction, the *Hawkeye* supported, if I remember right, Oliver P. Morton.

Two years later Hatton was on a railroad train in western Iowa and Blaine came aboard. He learned in some way that Hatton was a passenger, sought him out, and greeted him like a long-lost brother. He sat down by Hatton's side, he put his arm around Hatton's waist, he seized Hatton's hand, he interlaced his fingers with Hatton's, and then he said in oily tones:

"Now, Frank, my dear fellow, I want you to tell me why you did not support me in 1876."

Hatton said that the action filled him with a disgust and a distrust of which he could never rid himself.

He admitted, however, that Blaine's powers of memory were among the most wonderful of which we have any

record. He said that while he and Blaine were talking, the train stopped at a station and two farmers entered the car. Blaine gave one swift, sharp glance at them, sprang from his seat, and with outstretched hand went to greet them both, calling out their names and asking questions that seemed to show an intimate acquaintance with the personal life of each. Hatton listened to all this, supposing the men to be Blaine's old, warm, personal friends. He learned from them afterward that all Blaine knew of them was that they, with about fifty other men, had once been introduced to him when he came through their town campaigning. But I doubt if in his long career Mr. Blaine ever forgot a face he had noted, a name he had heard, or a fact about any human being, if once that fact had been clutched by the tentacles of his prodigious memory.

The fate that hung over him was so strange that for the presidency to which he aspired all his life he was beaten by a ridiculous accident. It was Dr. Burchard's "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion" speech that caused Mr. Blaine to lose New York State and the election; without it he was absolutely certain of both, for he was defeated by only 1,500 votes. That was a fluke and the fact that anybody knew of Burchard's alliteration was another fluke. A few Presbyterian clergymen met Mr. Blaine at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York to extend their good wishes. Dr. Burchard was moved to make a little speech. Not a newspaper thought the event important enough to cover. A news agency sent a man that covered this with several other assignments and happened to catch Dr. Burchard's phrase. A moment later and the thing would never have been reported and James Gillespie Blaine would have been President of the United States.

But to return to our 1892, that he should have joined

hands with Platt, the chief lieutenant and close adherent of his life-long relentless enemy, the residuary legatee of the old Stalwart contingent, struck many persons as inexplicable. I know not wherein it was more inexplicable than many other features of his career; than his performance with the Mulligan letters, for instance, or the story of his connection with Hocking Valley. The truth is the man was never to be understood nor accounted for on any ordinary standard of human conduct. To give but one illustration, take this Hocking Valley incident. Mr. Blaine long maintained the closest relations with the Chicago *Tribune,* which was his principal and always loyal supporter in the West. The Hocking Valley Railroad is an enterprise with an early history of shady character. A time came when it was under heavy fire from a court investigation. Mr. Blaine was accused of being interested in it. He publicly denied that he was or had ever been. But some time before he had written to the managing editor of the *Tribune,* asking that the paper refrain from any attack upon Hocking Valley as he was heavily interested in the property. For such things as these I know of no explanation except that Mr. Blaine's memory, so phenomenal about other matters, was as strangely defective about all affairs of business.

Eight months after his last defeat he died. He had been wasting away for years and dropped asleep from weakness. I think his life had been overwrought. There has been no more singular figure in American history. Viewing together such extraordinary incidents as those of the Mulligan and Fisher letters that would have driven any other man from public life, viewing Mr. Blaine's connection with questionable or vicious enterprises, viewing the fortune he built from life-long public service at small salaries, remembering his lack of any evidence of a definite policy or settled

convictions, the places he held and the following he won will seem to the future investigator hopelessly mysterious. Such a one will find indisputable evidence that Mr. Blaine exercised very great influence upon millions of his countrymen, but will never be able to tell how, nor why, nor to what end.

XIII

HOW CLEVELAND WAS NOMINATED IN 1892

THE Democratic Convention of 1892 was held in Chicago and nobody that attended it ever forgot his experiences there. From the beginning it had been turned over as a venture in profits to a gang of greedy speculators, and they seemed to have determined to establish a new record in quick fortune making. They erected on the lake front between Washington and Madison Streets a huge temporary wooden structure that they were good enough to call a "wigwam." By any other name it would have been as vile. It was so flimsily built that it shook in every wind, the roof leaked, the interior arrangements were of the crudest, and so badly planned that we gave sincere thanks whenever a session ended without disaster. But the murderous place seated about 22,000 persons, and the speculators easily disposed of all the seats. At the first session they must have taken in more than enough to pay all their expenses and the rest of the performances represented clear and enormous profits. Some persons objected to making of the National Convention of a great party a three-ringed circus and side show, but I am confident that such a conception never penetrated the minds of the Chicago speculators. It was too delicate.

To add to our discomforts, the week in which the Convention fell was marked by some of the most violent weather Chicago ever experienced. It was about the summer sol-

stice, the thunder storms chased one another across the prairies, the rain fell in a way I have never witnessed outside of the tropics, the lightning was sharp, the thunder terrific, and between these violences, which assailed us day and night, the air was hot, heavy, and depressing. Add to this a tense political situation now drawing to its crisis, the passions of men more fiercely aroused than at any other Convention of these times, the issue doubtful, accurate light upon it hard to get, the leaders too much involved to have any perspective, new methods and new influences at secret work that none of us could gauge, the eyes of the country turned upon the spot and the mind of the country demanding information that could not well be furnished, and one may apprehend a strenuous week. So far as we of the *Herald* were concerned we had still other troubles, for the arrangements for our quarters had met with some disaster and we were forced to take shelter in an unfinished hotel where was no service of any kind, and to get food as we could in the overcrowded city restaurants; often at a great waste of invaluable time. One of the ablest members of the staff fell ill and left us crippled, for no one could have foreseen the immense amount of work the Convention was to entail.

The political situation was both exciting and puzzling. A very strong movement was on foot to nominate Mr. Cleveland, who, having been defeated by Harrison in 1888, would ordinarily have been regarded as out of the race. Most of his genuine following was in the Middle and Western states, where he was regarded as a tariff reformer and a victim of the Tariff Interests in 1888. There was also a movement for him in the East, but as it was plainly manufactured and not genuine no one could tell how effective it might be, although upon its management

depended in great measure the choice of the Convention.

For still other reasons the contest was of unusual interest. Every mind with any turn for philosophic reflection must have been interested at times to observe the ease and certainty with which the thing we call public opinion may be directed or even manufactured by powers sufficiently adroit. We had between 1890 and 1892 a good illustration of this curious art. In 1888, following his tariff message, Mr. Cleveland had not been generally popular as a candidate for the presidency. His own party gave him a most perfunctory support and the powerful attacks upon him in the campaign were never once repelled with any vigor. One of the strongest reasons for his unpopularity ought never to be forgotten by those that attempt to gauge causes and effects in public affairs, and yet it was a thing to make every American hide his head with shame. A vile slander and falsehood to the effect that Mr. Cleveland beat his young and beautiful wife was deliberately concocted, industriously circulated, and strange as it may seem, widely credited. Nobody dared to print the monstrous lie; it traveled from individual to individual across the continent. The President of the United States could never deal in the courts with such a matter, circulated thus by word of mouth; the friends that knew the facts were few and their denials had little weight; and the fabrication went its way practically unchecked.

Readers of history may recall that similarly subtle and vicious weapons have been turned against most men that have attacked Vested Interests. Mr. Cleveland's attack was upon the Interests entrenched in the protective tariff, and he seems to have shared in consequence a somewhat common fate. The tide turned miraculously in 1890 and

from that time on Mr. Cleveland's star was in the ascendant. He had meantime done not one thing himself except retire to Wall Street and engage in corporation law practice, but the attacks upon him ceased and he was in a certain part of the press raised industriously toward the position of a popular hero; few men, it may be believed, having smaller claim to that eminence.

To understand all this it is necessary to revert to the fact that the election of 1888 was the last presidential election to be carried by the Manufacturing Interests of the country. A new force had arisen far overshadowing the Manufacturing Interests and destined to absorb them. The dominating power now was the great banks and financial institutions, even then steadily passing into one control. This power had determined to make Mr. Cleveland President. It cared little about minor changes in the tariff and was perfectly willing that anybody should shout his head off for Free Trade so long as its own business was properly looked after. Whoever will reflect upon the relations between Wall Street and the second Cleveland administration will see at once how true this is.

The political side of these new Interests was directed by William C. Whitney, a man whose extraordinary abilities, resolution, and achievements seem to me to have been but poorly recorded. In power to dominate men I have never known his equal; he bullied them, towered over them with his big frame, big voice and abnormally long head, outthought them, outgeneraled them, terrifying some and fascinating others in a way that seemed unaccountable. I remember that once a New York managing editor got a story in which Mr. Whitney's name was involved and called him on the telephone at his Long Island residence to ask him about it.

"Are you going to print that story?" Mr. Whitney inquired when he had heard the outline.

"Why, yes," said the editor. "We purpose to print it."

There was a long silence and then Mr. Whitney said:

"I should advise you not to publish that story," and rang off.

That was all he said, but the managing editor came out of the booth, wiping the perspiration from his brow, and ordered the story killed. He said that the significance that Mr. Whitney's voice threw into that one short sentence was overpowering and something he could never describe.

Mr. Whitney had charge of the Cleveland forces at the Chicago Convention; he was the general on the field and assuredly he shook up all the traditional tactics and gave to the wisest something new to think of. No man at any National Convention has ever performed a feat so difficult nor commanded with such skill, audacity, and uniform success. To make his performance the more wonderful, he had never been much in politics, and had no experience as a political leader. Yet he made the old hands look like babies, a curious illustration of the fact that tradition and precedent do but hamper the man that gives heed to them.

The opposition to Cleveland's nomination was very bitter, particularly from Tammany Hall, which hated him with a fervor not to be described otherwise than as savage, and which openly proclaimed that if nominated he could never carry the state of New York. This was equivalent to saying that he could not be elected, and was regarded also as equivalent to saying that Tammany Hall would knife him. As it had contributed effectively to his defeat in 1888, this veiled threat had great weight elsewhere and the Cleveland cause was looked upon from the start as

exceedingly doubtful. Tammany and the Anti-Cleveland Democrats managed the State Convention to suit themselves, pledged the delegation irrevocably to David Bennett Hill, Cleveland's old-time rival and enemy, selected able men to be delegates and instructed them to fight Cleveland to the end. In that delegation sat Richard Croker, Governor Flower, Bourke Cockran, William F. Sheehan, and other veteran commanders, all determined that Cleveland should be defeated.

When the Convention met, Cleveland had the largest number of instructed delegates but fell far short of enough to nominate. In National Conventions of the Democratic party a two-thirds vote is necessary to nominate a candidate for the presidency. All the experts agreed that if Cleveland were not nominated on the first ballot, he could not possibly be nominated at all, and in that event some dark horse, probably a man from the West, would be selected.

Mr. Whitney's task, therefore, was to gain enough of the uninstructed or hostile delegations to win on the first ballot. Otherwise he was lost. And he must do this winning between the time when the delegations arrived in Chicago and the hour of the first ballot. The *Herald* had made a very careful, impartial canvass of the uninstructed delegations and none of us could see where he had a practical chance to win. Such also was the deliberate judgment of the generals opposed to him, who, after looking over the field upon their arrival, assured us confidentially that Cleveland was beaten.

Mr. Whitney established his headquarters at the Richelieu Hotel, where he took two large suites, and went at the gigantic task before him. I was assigned to cover him and the Cleveland campaign generally, and I soon found the assignment of extraordinary interest. Whether an in-

experienced hand could make progress against such famous leaders was one absorbing topic, but soon Mr. Whitney himself far surpassed it. From the beginning his tactics astonished and vastly entertained us. Apparently he did everything in the open, had nothing to conceal, never thought it worth while to assume the air of mystery and importance that the average politician delights to wear, and told us every night exactly where he stood as the result of the day's work. As in the famous instance of Bismarck, because he told the truth everybody thought he was lying and possibly he was but practicing a master stroke of art, but I had and have an impression that he saw through and scorned the tricks of the regular politicians and purposed to fight in his way, not theirs.

He had a small private room in one of his suites and when he was closeted there with somebody he was not to be seen, but at other times he stood squarely on his two feet and saw everybody that came in. After a day or two he arranged with us, to save his time and ours, that we should come to him every night at half-past nine and he would tell us whatever we wished to know. Every night, therefore, at half-past nine, he stood before a circle of us answering every question that was put to him, answering it promptly and with every appearance of frankness. He had on these occasions a manner that struck me as exceedingly well chosen. He was courteous and good natured, but never ingratiating; he preserved an absolute dignity and perfect seriousness; and while giving all desired information in a rapid, orderly manner, he seldom volunteered any remarks of his own. He framed his sentences with business-like directness, never adorned them with exaggeration, never made a misstatement to us, never boasted, and spoke always like a man that was telling the truth because he did not

think it was worth his while to tell anything else. I will give a sample of these regular evening conversations. We would begin about like this:

"Well, Mr. Whitney, what did you do to-day?"

"To-day, we won the Nevada delegation, six votes, and the Idaho delegation, six votes."

"How do you mean, won them?"

"They are now pledged to vote in the Convention for Grover Cleveland."

"On the first ballot, I suppose."

"On the first ballot and on every other ballot."

"Were those uninstructed delegations?"

"Yes."

"Did they have any preference when they came here?"

"Some of the delegates favored Mr. Boies and some thought well of Mr. Hill."

"And now they will vote for Mr. Cleveland?"

"Yes."

"Why were they opposed to Cleveland in the first place?"

"They doubted if he could carry New York."

"What do they think about that now?"

"They know now that he can and will."

"In spite of Tammany Hall?"

"Tammany Hall will support Mr. Cleveland in the election."

"How many votes have you secured so far?"

"Five hundred and twenty-four. We had five hundred and twelve yesterday, and these two delegations bring the total to five twenty-four."

"What do you purpose to do to-morrow?"

"To-morrow I have engagements with the delegations from North Dakota and Arizona." And so on. Once the

late Frank Mack, who represented the Associated Press, asked a question that Mr. Whitney could not answer. He smiled a flickering little smile, gone in an instant, said very quietly, "You should have been a lawyer," and then explained why he could not answer.

At first we thought all this was exaggerated or ill-based and from Mr. Whitney went hot foot to the delegations he had named to see if he had told the truth about them. They always cheerfully admitted that he had, and that they had joined the Cleveland forces. Previously, perhaps, they had expressed to us very doubtful or even hostile opinions about Mr. Cleveland. Now they were certain that he was the best man and would surely win. As to the logic that had persuaded them of their previous errors I may say that some of us entertained suspicions, but we never could verify them. All we knew was that a delegation would come to Mr. Whitney's private room and be closeted with him, perhaps all day. In the evening Mr. Whitney would announce that delegation as having been added to his string of fish and the delegation itself would joyously confess that such was the fact. Meantime the Hill people fumed and proclaimed, but one could see that they were beginning to be perplexed and worried.

On the day that the Convention assembled Mr. Whitney lacked more than one hundred of his necessary total and if the nomination had been made that day Cleveland would never have been chosen and in all probability the history of the next few years would have been very different. But the iron man at the Richelieu toiled on. The next day he had undeniably reduced the margin between him and victory, and still he was beaten. The next day saw further inroads into the opposition and yet not enough. On the day that the nomination was to be made, he lacked, accord-

ing to our figures, twenty-two votes of enough to nominate on the first ballot, and the opposition tried to feel relieved and confident.

The Convention assembled at two o'clock in the afternoon of a wild day. One fierce storm after another rolled over the wretched wigwam, sometimes with howling winds that threatened momentarily to bring down the whole flimsy structure upon us, sometimes with terrifying lightning and thunder that reduced the audience to awe-struck silence, sometimes with periods in which a sickly green light would shine in the skies and the air below be stifling with heat. Rain fell in a deluge, the jerry-built roof admitted it in torrents over the region reserved for the press, and those of us that were without umbrellas to raise sat for hours in unimaginable discomfort.

The nervous tension among the 22,000 spectators was tightly drawn that afternoon, for the chances of a terrible disaster were too plain for the most careless to ignore. The building was as badly planned as badly built; the exits were criminally inadequate, the aisles too few and too narrow, and the galleries without sufficient stairways. When a tremendous squall would shake the whole rotten edifice or when a bolt of lightning fell close by one could not but speculate on one's chances of surviving a fire in the building or its collapse. The noise of the thunder, rain, and wind, and the abnormal gloom of the heavens, seemed to augment these forebodings until I should not have been surprised to see anything happen.

The newspaper men sat in a great pen, with rising seats backed up against a low partition at the right of the platform. No exit was provided for them at the rear but beyond the partition was a chief passageway to the front doors. Consequently in the event of a panic they were in a

place of peculiar danger. About four o'clock came a storm of unusual ferocity. In the midst of it, Governor Flower, who was chairman of the New York delegation, arose from his seat on the floor and moved down the aisle to consult with another Hill delegation. As he did so the electric light that was suspended from the roof directly over his chair, fell with a resounding crash upon the spot where a moment before he had been sitting, and where, if he had not arisen, it would have killed him instantly.

Everybody heard the crash but few persons knew the cause, and at the sound, panic seized the over-tensioned audience. Thousands of men sprang for the narrow exits, which the next moment were choked and impassable. Other thousands on the main floor began to scramble over the reporters' tables to get at the passage beyond. To tell the truth, I gave myself up for lost, and had no expectation but that in another moment I should be lying on the floor crushed beneath the heels of a frantic mob. Men were already running over the reporters' desks. I had an impression as swift as lightning of a great sea of wild and frightened faces rushing toward the place where I sat. A young man with mouth open and eyes of zoological terror stood on the desk before mine, one foot raised within a foot of my face. And then in some mysterious way the panic wave suddenly stopped, the crowd paused, turned about to look, and slowly retreated. What checked its flight I do not know: certainly no effort of the chairman, William L. Wilson, who, physically unable to cope with such a crowd, was at all times unheeded and rather a pathetic figure. But the narrowness of the escape was testified to in the white faces I saw about me, my own, no doubt, as white as any. Mrs. Alexander Sullivan, who represented one of the Chicago dailies and sat nearly be-

hind me, fainted when the crowd began to run over the desks.

The Convention worked its way over the necessary preliminaries, all minds intent upon the great battle now near at hand. The nominating and seconding speeches were made, one after another. I have often wondered at this dreary farce, which seems on the whole the most ridiculous employment known to man and the least defensible of all our Convention customs. If we except Mr. Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech in the Convention of 1896, it is safe to say that not one vote was ever affected by this species of eloquence. It is, in fact, mere wind-jamming and wasted effort. On this occasion, as in every other Convention in my long experience, nobody wanted to hear most of the tiresome splutterers that were put forward to present the various favorite sons, but even if the desire had been universal it could not have been gratified; since in that frightful place only a voice of exceptional quality could carry to the farthest limits. Bourke Cockran, indeed, because of his fame, his impressive figure, and his unusual gifts as an orator, was listened to, but in every other case the speaker soon found himself shouting and gesticulating to a vast crowd that heard not one word he said, but was cheerfully engaged in making a din of its own. It is a very odd fact that in the face of such an impossible condition all of these orators will regularly persist to the end of their prepared harangues. One of them on this occasion spoke for more than an hour in an uproar so great that even the stenographers directly in front of him could hardly hear him.

Hour after hour, these tiresome performances went on, the crowd, with all its sporting instincts aroused, impatient for the vote that would decide the race, the delegates under the strain of an intense excitement, the newspaper men

watching the clock and wondering whether the vote would come in time for the morning papers. No recess was taken for dinner; without intermission the orators labored on. The roll of states was being called alphabetically; as each state was named the orators in its delegation had the right to arise and nominate a candidate or second the nomination of one already in the race. So the leaden-footed hours (I never comprehended that classic phrase before) dragged on, the rain falling outside, the wind howling, the wigwam trembling, and a cataract descending upon the exhausted correspondents. Now and then an unusually loud peal of thunder would roll by and leave in its wake an instant of frightened silence, and then the uproar in the hall would begin again.

Midnight came and the roll call was uncompleted. The men in charge for the New York morning newspapers began to fidget. There seemed to be no chance of getting a vote until most of the editions should be printed. Soon after two o'clock the last state was called, the last shriek of unheard eloquence ceased, and the secretaries prepared for the first ballot.

We knew that at the moment Mr. Cleveland lacked at least twenty votes of enough to nominate him, and the question was whether Mr. Whitney's tactics would suffice to get those twenty votes before the end of the roll call. There was one delegation from a region that I will call Promisedland that was in a way of pivotal importance. It was claimed confidently by the Anti-Cleveland men, and assigned to an Anti-Cleveland column, but concerning it were afloat vague rumors that made us doubtful. It cast not many votes, but we generally understood that if it cast these for Cleveland enough others would swing over to make his nomination sure.

The secretaries went down the list, reading the names of the states and recording the votes as they were announced from the floor by the delegation chairmen. Every state fell out according to predictions. New York was called and amid thunderous applause cast its solid vote for Hill. Promisedland was close at hand. A certain man walked out upon the floor and bent over in earnest conversation with the boss of the Promisedland delegation. A member of the *Herald* staff that happened to be in a favorable position to observe, declared that words passed between these men and also something else. Colonel Tim Williams, Governor Flower's private secretary, who had worked with me on the old *Commercial Advertiser,* was also watching this scene. Ordinarily one of the most reserved and self-contained of men he now lost control of himself and rushed out upon the floor of the Convention, shouting objections. At that moment Promisedland was called, the chairman arose and announced the vote of the state for Cleveland, and in the deafening applause that for several minutes rolled through the hall the protests of Colonel Williams and other Hill men were unheard, and the vote was recorded. After that the Whitney programme went through without a hitch and Mr. Cleveland was triumphantly nominated. The day had broken when tired, wet, and desperately hungry we straggled out of that dreadful place. Most of us had been on duty there all day and all night without food or rest or change of position.

That afternoon the Convention reassembled to name the candidate for Vice-President. The favorite for the place was Governor Horace Boies of Iowa. He had been a strong candidate for the Presidential nomination and the expectation was that by acclamation he would be nominated for Vice-President. To the general surprise Governor

Boies's managers absolutely declined to allow the use of his name. Their reason was not disclosed but was ascribed to resentment and disappointment over the loss of the first place on the ticket. This was the common belief, but it was most unjust and unfounded. The real reason, unknown at the time outside of the Iowa leaders, was that Governor Boies, though of a powerful mind and great abilities, had one defect in his mental or physical make-up, I know not which. It was impossible for him to remember faces. In all other respects his memory was unusual; names, facts, figures, statistics, precedents, statutes, his mind gripped instantly and relentlessly. He could make an argument on the tariff question, bristling with statistics, and never once be at loss for a fact or a reference. But he could not remember faces; a man introduced many times to him would still be a stranger in his ken unless he could fix in his mind some detail of that man's dress, or beard; his watchguard, very likely, or his coat. While he was Governor of Iowa this difficulty was obviated and concealed by having always somebody about him that would whisper into his ear the name for which he was struggling. It was not, in fact, of much importance while he was governor but as presiding officer of the United States Senate it would have been an impossible handicap. While he was a most capable executive he would have been a disastrous failure as a chairman and his friends for that reason alone withdrew his name.

The choice fell upon General Adlai E. Stevenson, of Bloomington, Illinois, a Kentuckian by birth, and a fine type of the old-style of rugged manhood.

What the country desired next to know was what Tammany Hall would do. Their own favorite had been routed, the man they hated and abhorred had been chosen. Fol-

lowing precedent it was generally believed that Tammany would knife Cleveland at the polls, and the disgusted braves on the way home made no secret that such was their intention. I remember in particular some vicious interviews that they gave out at Detroit in which they defied the Democrats of the country to elect the ticket. It was a fiercely roaring tiger that went home in June but it was a mild, gentle, and well-trained beast that marched up to the polls in November and voted solidly for Grover Cleveland. Gilroy, the Tammany candidate for Mayor, ran not three hundred votes ahead.

Over this marvel the political experts pondered. If they could have looked a little into the future they would not have been astonished. It was the Whitney hand that tamed the savage beast—the Whitney hand, which controlled the enormous traction interests of the city and was upheld by the banks, the sugar trust, and some other influences since famous in history. Mr. Whitney had good reason for his confidence. Such, indeed, was his habit; and in this instance he knew Tammany Hall as he knew his own hands and he knew exactly what strings being pulled would reduce it to absolute subjection. He let the braves roar and flourish their scalping knives and perform their ghost dances until they had sufficiently relieved their anguished minds. Then, he gently but firmly pulled the strings. The fact was that he controlled the great traction Interests of New York City and close union with those Interests was indispensable to the welfare of Tammany and its chieftains. Too many contracts were at stake for Tammany contractors, too much financial support was at stake for Tammany leaders, too many jobs were at Mr. Whitney's disposal. In his calm, masterful, ruthless way he had only to make a few suggestions to Mr. Croker and the whole Tammany pack set

resolutely to work to pile up the vote for Grover Cleveland.

It was the first appearance of a close alliance that lasted many years and decided the fate of more than one contest. Likewise that election saw the first appearance of what has since been the greatest influence in national affairs. For back of Mr. Whitney, supporting him and even going beyond him, was the great Financial Interest that ruled absolutely the second Cleveland administration, worked the "endless chain" of bond issues, used its power to make more money and the money it made to gain more power and make more money, until it rose to its present gigantic and overshadowing influence.

Mr. Whitney at Chicago and elsewhere was its city editor, charged with the task of securing Mr. Cleveland's nomination. I doubt if by any chance another man could have been found so able for that task. In politics as in business he was the most resourceful, capable, ready man of his times. In neither line of activities were his methods fully disclosed. We learned something of his amazing command over the machinery of high finance when after his death the New York Traction monopoly that he had formed went to wreck. But men seemed to hesitate even then to believe what the revelations indicated. Similarly at Chicago, none of us ever wrote or suggested the conclusions we had formed in our own minds. It was as well. To this day I know not what passed between the Cleveland man and the boss of the Promisedland delegation. Perhaps the transaction was one in dried prunes. I judged from the demeanor of Colonel Williams and others of the Hill contingent that they did not think the conversation referred to dried prunes. Whatever may have been its subject it seemed to be much esteemed by the delegation. Perhaps it was, after all, a

matter of dried prunes and the delegation was very fond of dried prunes.

Mr. Whitney was never much of a talker, and yet his arguments behind closed doors there at the Hotel Richelieu must have been of a powerful order of logic, judging by the results. I am inclined to think that at least they were not dry arguments. On my way back to New York Mr. Whitney's private secretary was a passenger in the same sleeper. He had with him a fair sized valise filled to its capacity with little pink slips of paper. These I recognized as bar checks of the Hotel Richelieu. They were signed with Mr. Whitney's name. The secretary's business was to count these, and total the amount they represented. It was a long task.

XIV

TRAVELS WITH THE CHOLERA FLEET

I AM not sure that philosophers, psychologists, and the like have thought enough about a thing that may be called infectional hysteria. Any man that was on the city staff of a New York newspaper late in the summer of 1892 would be likely to have such a doubt.

Cholera was epidemic in Europe that summer. Cholera had often been epidemic in Europe. This year it was worse than usual and in more places. It was bad in the Mediterranean ports, where it was a familiar visitor, and it was bad in the Baltic ports, where it had not been known for years. Modern sanitation has since robbed this disease of most of its terrors (for civilized communities at least), but in those days it seemed to possess for many persons the very name of fear. The London newspapers, which, in spite of virtuous protestations, are as sensational as any others, printed daily columns of minutiæ about the panic and the dreadful conditions supposed to exist in the cities of the inferior Latins and Teutons, and many American journals dutifully paid cable tolls on this rubbish that they might have the pleasure of reprinting it. The result being, I suppose, that cholera got on the world's nerves and a part of the public came to watch the so-called advance of the disease as of some deadly and irresistible enemy.

Suddenly such New Yorkers as were of this order of mind awoke to the fact that the enemy was at their doors.

An incoming steamship was obliged to report that a case of cholera had developed among its passengers on the voyage. The vessel was stopped at Quarantine, and sent to the Lower Bay with all on board for detention and observation. This was following the practice usual and familiar in such cases; but for some reason fright seized upon the community, or a part of it. Almost every summer at least one ship had arrived with a similar report and had been similarly treated, and the city had heeded not in the least. But on this occasion the thing was interpreted to mean that we were imminently threatened with the worst that had befallen Naples or Hamburg, and a frantic demand went up that we should be guarded with extraordinary precautions.

After a time arrived another steamer with a cholera case; then another. These were held in the same manner. Soon the Lower Bay began to be spotted with steamers flying the yellow flag of quarantine and held for the health officers' inspection and observation.

A grave situation now arose. The recognized cholera cases were taken from the ships and placed in the excellent quarantine hospitals on Hoffman and Swinburne Islands, in the upper part of the Lower Bay. But until at least twelve days should have elapsed since the last case had been removed from a ship no other person on that ship was held to be free from the danger of infection. The result was that the hundreds of passengers were prisoners on these steamers thus detained; their numbers were steadily increasing as more ships came in; and the question that confronted the authorities was what to do with all these. It was the busiest time of the year for west bound traffic; the rush of home-coming American tourists was at its height; on some days three crowded ships would be

added to the yellow-flagged fleet in the Lower Bay. The steamship companies were under a tremendous pressure to get their vessels unloaded and returned to the other side; under quarantine regulations, not a passenger nor a pound of freight could be discharged. Thus the sailing lists were dislocated and a loud wail was reported from European ports, where thousands of panic stricken Americans, struggling homeward, were confronted with the prospect of indefinite delay, probably in a place where the cholera was daily growing worse. To the bitter complaints of these the merchants added sterner protests, for they could not get ships to load and the machinery of business was being ungeared. On the other hand the health authorities and the great majority of the community demanded the most rigid enforcement of the quarantine regulations.

The United States Government, through its Treasury department, had charge and supervision of the steerage passengers until they should be passed through its Ellis Island doorway. It now stepped in and dealt with their plight by creating on government ground, at Sandy Hook, a crude, temporary refuge called Camp Low, to which all steerage passengers were removed for observation. This was as far as the government could go and it had no effect upon the general situation. The first and second cabin passengers still remained upon the quarantined steamers; the government could do nothing for them; and until they could be released they tied up the steamships.

Many of these passengers were returning business men that, held thus helpless prisoners within sight of the city, believed that in their absence they would be ruined; some had notes to meet or the fall trade to care for; some were lawyers that had cases to try, in their minds of vital importance; some were actors and actresses, announced to

open their engagements upon dates close at hand or already passed; some were judges whose vacations had expired; and some were prominent politicians concerned in the campaign, which was presidential. Nearly all had friends, relatives, partners, managers, or associates that daily mobbed the steamship offices and clamored, threatened, and implored without avail.

The greater newspapers covered this news field day and night with tugs, for no one could place a limit on the possible sensation any arriving steamer might bring to port. Captains of these vessels uniformly sought to conceal from the public the facts about any cases of cholera that might have developed upon the voyage, which was exactly the news we were hiring the tugs to obtain. This added to the work a spice of excitement, for some of the captains took long chances in the means they used to elude or to drive away the newspaper tugs that hovered about them as they plowed along the channels. I have seen the *Herald's* tug sticking like a leech alongside while a steamer's hose deluged it with filthy and infected water from the Elbe and a reporter in oil-skins and a sou'wester stood upon the top of the pilot house and gathered facts from passengers that meantime were fighting with petty officers for the right to speak. This made an interesting scene, but one that with much repetition might in time become tiresome to the participants.

It is an odd reflection to me now that in those days the machinery of each newspaper office was organized to get exclusive news, the staff of each newspaper was in every way urged and inspired to get exclusive news, the first object of the commanders and reporters alike was to get exclusive news, and most of the exclusive news that was secured and printed came to the net by accident or good luck and without planning, designing, or winning. For

instance every newspaper crew in the tugs that were now scurrying around the Lower Bay desired to get exclusive news of the arrival of a vessel with a cholera story. In the daytime an incoming steamer moved up the channel like a circus wagon rumbling up Broadway, in the sight of all observers; but at night the case was very different. At night a steamer could slip in and anchor in Gravesend Bay or the Horseshoe and no one but the observer at the Hook light be the wiser, for once inside it had a wide, dark inland sea wherein to hide.

By mere chance, two of us on the *Herald* tug, William O. Inglis and I, were amateur pilots and fairly equipped with steamship knowledge. I had usually taken my vacations in the shape of cruises on pilot boats, both of us knew many pilots intimately, and both knew the channels of the harbor. To this day I believe I can run either the old Main Ship or Gedney's Channel in anything drawing less than twenty feet and not take the ground—or anyway not more than once.* Being thus familiar with the ways of incoming vessels, Inglis and I knew that the one safe spot in which to wait for all of them was just inside the point of Sandy Hook where the channel sweeps within a short distance of the shore. Whatever course a steamer might take after it had passed this spot, every steamer must traverse here the one path. So the *Herald* tug lay just inside the point of the Hook, caught every steamer that came in, and one night speared the one best beat of the season.

It was a big German bound from Hamburg and on its voyage more than twenty cases of cholera had developed, so rapidly that terror had seized the passengers and they had begged the captain first to put into Cape Race, and

*Technical pleasantry; put in for the exclusive delectation of pilots. There was no Ambrose Channel in 1892.

then into Halifax; to which his brief, pungent reply would have made at any time an episode of surpassing interest.

All this we discovered later. As the steamer straightened up around the point of the Hook and fell into her bearings by the beacons, we pounced down upon her like pirates from their lair, ranged alongside, and hailed the bridge. No answer. We called for the captain, we called for the officer in charge, we even, at a venture, called for the purser. No answer. We could see officers on the bridge looking down on us, but that captain must have been well coached before he left port; not a soul would answer. We slipped astern a little, where from the second cabin ports a row of heads projected, and there we began to accumulate the details of our story. It was taking the best possible shape in the capable hands of a young man that with his head thrust through a port was giving us vivid word pictures of conditions on that ship, when the door behind him flew open, two petty officers leaped into his stateroom, grabbed him each by a leg, and jerked him aboard so unceremoniously that for an instant he swung in their hands with head down and feet in the air as if they were shaking a pair of old trousers. The next instant the port was closed and screwed down hard. As we slipped sternward this operation aboard the steamer kept even pace with us until not a port was left open. At the same time officers went along the decks driving passengers back from the rails.

We had gathered a good story but not quite enough. I thought it possible the pilot that was bringing the steamer in might be one I knew. We ranged back under the bridge and yelled for him. Pilots are state officers and independent of steamship captains. This one came to the side in answer to the hail and it was Harry S——, a blond Norwegian

with whom I had sailed thousands of miles. He cared as little about the captain's notions of publicity as he cared for a ten-knot breeze. When he had anchored the boat in the Horseshoe he leaned over the railing and gave us everything he had gathered in the twenty-four hours he had been aboard, for in those days were no steam pilot boats hugging the bar, but schooners that often cruised eastward as far as Sixty-three. He knew what we wanted and delivered it and there was nothing better in all that year.

But to come back to this grievous situation in the Lower Bay, where the steamships were getting thick, here in the midst of it, came in the great Normannia, crack boat of her day, loaded to the guards, and went to anchor with the rest. Her steerage passengers were removed to Camp Low, but about seven hundred prisoners of the first and second cabins stamped, swore, or idled about her decks. The need of some of them that they should communicate with the shore was very urgent, or was believed to be. Morrill Goddard was then city editor of the New York *World* and one of the best city editors that paper ever had, or any other. He introduced a novelty by appearing in person on the *World's* tug to direct his staff on the place of battle. In the goodness of his heart he allowed some of the distressed Normannians to cast letters upon the deck of the *World's* tug and subsequently mailed these letters. I cite as evidence of the irrational state of the public mind the fact that when the community learned of the generous action of the *World's* representatives a savage complaint arose. There was not the slightest chance that the letters the *World's* tug took to the city could be infected or the source of any danger. No case of cholera had developed among the cabin passengers, all of whom were perfectly well.

Nevertheless thousands of thoughtless persons took fright at the suggestion, the authorities were deluged with complaints, the *World* was vehemently denounced; and the Health Officer was obliged to issue orders that not even letters could be taken from the quarantined steamers. Poor Health Officer! Some public servants are between two fires; he was among fifty-two, mostly of hysterical origin. In the midst of all he kept his head. On top of the rest he was a brother-in-law of Richard Croker, the Tammany leader, and politics had an active part in the assaults that were made upon him. Anything even remotely connected with Tammany was fair game.

The steamship company that owned the Normannia had imperative need of her services and could not afford to have her tied up at a time when west bound traffic was at the seasonable high tide. What to do with these cabin passengers was the crux of the problem; they could not be landed and they could not be carried back. The managers of the company went down to a steamboat infirmary at New London and dragged thence the ancient Sound steamer Stonington, long out of commission and partly dismantled. This antique relic they anchored in the Lower Bay, loaded it with stores, transferred to it all the cabin passengers, and released the Normannia.

The second state of these unfortunate waifs was now worse than the first. Doubtless the company did the best it could under the imperative law of profits that rules us all; doubtless also, in such circumstances, if the Stonington had been the grandest of all floating palaces, the prisoner-passengers would have complained. But the Stonington was not a floating palace; she was, in fact, ill equipped for this or any other service; her arrangements were crude, the stores had been hastily or carelessly selected.

Long after these episodes had passed from the world's attention the wails of her enforced guests arose upon the air, telling of leaky decks, defective accommodations, and life sustained chiefly on pilot bread and salt horse.

This was the situation, which, it appeared, no authority was able to relieve. The city government could do nothing; the case was beyond its jurisdiction. The state government could do nothing; the legislature was not in session. The national government could do nothing; Congress was not in session. No power appeared anywhere with authority to act. The governor of the state was Roswell P. Flower and he took the matter into his own hands. On the shore of Long Island, forty miles east of Sandy Hook, was Fire Island; chiefly a long sand-spit with a light-house and great rambling summer hotel. With his own funds Governor Flower bought the whole thing; except of course the light-house, but including the hotel. Then he ordered all cabin passengers on the quarantined steamers in the bay to be transferred to his hotel. As the steerage passengers were at Camp Low this solved the problem.

The Normannians were to go first, because their plight on the Stonington was the least tolerable. Within twelve hours, a summer excursion steamer, impressed for the purpose, came along and took them aboard for Fire Island.

Joy dawned upon the melancholy prisoners. Here was the first useful thing that had been done in their behalf.

Outside the Hook a heavy sea was piling up before a fierce northeasterly wind, cold and cutting. The airy, fairy excursion boat could not be heated. She had never been built for sea-going and now pounded about in a way that alarmed such of the passengers as were in a condition to take note of her uneasy gig-steps. A majority were sea-sick.

Dark fell before they reached the inlet, which is long and crooked. No pilot appeared in answer to signals, the captain dared not attempt the passage in the dark, and the steamer must needs return through heavy seas to the old moorings in New York harbor. Next morning another attempt was made, the inlet was threaded, the weary ones of the Normannia rejoiced as they prepared to land after so many troubles.

They did not land. As the steamer turned the last buoy the shores about the landing place were seen to be crowded with men, men with arms in their hands, angry, gesticulating men. The whole country side from Far Rockaway to Babylon had risen in hysteria and revolt. What! dump cholera upon them? Pass off upon the innocent rustic the cargo of germs that had been repulsed from the city? Not if the innocent rustics were alive and aware of their surroundings. A kind of historical and archeological museum of arms was gathered to enforce the protest; garrets were ransacked and the scrap-heaps robbed. Ducking guns and heirloom muskets, old army rifles and modern breech-loaders, revolvers and pistols, anything that could be charged with powder in any expectation that it would explode, adorned that seething throng. In curt, plain speech the natives ordered the captain to get hence with his load and delay not, for the steamer was not to be allowed to land anywhere in that neighborhood. And they enforced these remarks by pointing various weapons, antique and modern, at the captain's head.

There was nothing to do but to obey. Sadly the captain turned about and headed for the ocean, a part of the armed and aroused people following on shore to make sure that there was no halting on the way. So they went out once more into the heavy sea and bitter wind. I passed

them in the *Herald's* tug and a casual observation through the glass convinced me that gloom sat heavily upon that prow. Soon after daybreak the harassed Normannians, being seven hundred of the most disgusted persons on earth, came to anchor again in their old berth in the Lower Bay.

The mishap was both grave and comical. It was an insurrection against the power of the state and it made the plight of the Normannians still more pitiable; but on the other hand the idea of a popular uprising on a pretext so absurd was the occasion for endless jest.

Governor Flower and the state authorities did not view lightly the armed resistance to their plans. On receipt of the news, the governor called out the Naval Reserves and ordered them to Fire Island, after which the excursion boat was to lumber once more down the coast.

A day passed before the Naval Reserves could be mobilized and proceed to the seat of war in another craft of the same type. It was a journey that proved too much for the seamanship of some of the warriors, whose inanimate forms stretched upon the steamer's deck presented to the *Herald's* tug a highly incongruous and uninspiring sight. Nevertheless, they got safely to Fire Island, quelled the insurrection, overawed the excited populace, and put the hotel under guard. That night the Normannians once more rolled their way heavily down the coast and a little after daybreak were drawn into Fire Island Inlet.

But before the landing place a new misfortune befell the unlucky expedition. Something went wrong with the steamer's engines: they stopped and could not be started again. So for hours the forlorn company lay there, looking helplessly at the shore, which was only three or four hundred feet away. At last we came along in the *Herald's* tug Assistance. Captain Joe Parker grasped the situation,

made fast alongside, and pushed the craft up to the landing.

And thus at half-past two o'clock in the afternoon, three weeks after they had left Hamburg, the Normannia's passengers were allowed to disembark upon the shores of their native land. They were marshaled into a procession, headed by the ship's band of German stewards, which with an almost inconceivable gravity formed at the gang plank, playing a sprightly air.

And what, for a guess?

"Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean!"

And still I have heard persons assert that the German is lacking in humor.

So they went, marching two by two, up the long walk to the hotel, guarded by the gallant Naval Reserves, and glared at from a distance by the baffled insurrectionists of Great South Bay.

But, in a way, the incident did good. It made everybody laugh and as I have before observed, laughter is the sovereign cure for public hysteria. The foolishness of the Bayside panic reflected the foolishness of the city's panic. People, regaining their reasoning powers, began to perceive that with the able watch and ward that modern science kept at the city's gates, the chance of a cholera epidemic was about like the chance of a destructive earthquake and neither justified worry.

But my own recollections of this chapter in New York's history are still tinged with melancholy because of a sad affair of which I have not told you. We had on the *Herald* staff at that time an excellent young reporter widely noted for the fashionable elegance of his attire and his well-founded pride in his personal pulchritude. On the day Camp Low was opened at Sandy Hook this beauteous youth entered the city room arrayed in new fall garments

of poetic charm and artistic workmanship. As he came jauntily in, swinging a sweet little cane and wearing a flower in his button-hole, the city editor met him with a galvanizing command to hie him on the instant to Camp Low. No time was allowed to gather baggage; the boat was on the point of leaving. He entered the camp as he was and found that he was debarred from all means of communication except by telegraph. A heart-rending appeal that he dispatched, begging that a change of clothing be sent to him, went astray. He waited two days and sent another in which he referred poignantly to his former request for relief. This duly arrived and was interpreted to mean that he was sick of his assignment and wished to have someone sent in his place. At a time when every man on the staff was working double tides this idea did not appeal strongly to the city editor, and he allowed it to go for ten days without response. Then he sent another man on the Camp Low post. Young Fashion Plate was relieved, but the authorities insisted upon disinfecting his clothing with superheated steam, in the which process the poetic autumn garments were reduced to about one-half of their original proportions. So clad, and smarting under the sense of injury, the young man returned to the city, and the spectacle of him stalking gloomily into the office with his sleeves at his elbows and his trousers stopping short of his shoe tops is one of the saddest I can remember.

XV

TALES OF A CITY ROOM CALIPH

In a remote corner of King's County a quarter of a century ago was a devout and worthy sisterhood of a religious order given over to good works and study in seclusion from the world. The house it occupied was an old mansion in an estate of several acres, and being surrounded by almost a thicket of trees the inmates seemed to dwell as far from Broadway as if on a Pacific Island.

One day a story broke that had an end in this quiet retreat, and a *Sun* reporter went out there to get it. The most excellent woman at the head of the institution was astonished at his visit, but received him courteously and put him in the way to get the information he needed.

When he was about to go she said, with an air of slight embarrassment, that she had a question she would like to ask him. Being encouraged to propound it she explained that the members of the order lived away from the world and knew little of its ways. They had heard of reporters but had never seen one; they had now heard that one was present in their house; they had great curiosity to see what a reporter was like; and would he mind a request that he should remain for a few minutes until they could march through the room and look at him?

"Mind?" said the reporter, "why, certainly not. In all ways we strive to please," and he stood in the hall while the entire sisterhood marched in solemn order from the parlor

to the refectory and satiated their curiosity about the only living reporter then in a state of captivity.

I have often observed a similar impulse among folks whose way in life is much nearer to the great world. Because of it the dramatists have been sometimes led (or misled) to introduce a reporter among their characters, with results truly calculated to make the judicious grieve. But actual episodes from actual life in a newspaper office ought to be a legitimate way to lay bare the arcana of a mysterious and interesting trade, and for that purpose I now append a few.

The Tale of Grievous Dole

The attributes of cynicism are the traditional badge of the reporters' tribe and constitute the true professional bearing, much as owlish and superhuman gravity denote the class-conscious physician and a fondness for useless disputation proclaims the callow attorney. Only with this difference, that in the case of the reporter the thing has not only good excuse but practical value. Indeed, if the reporter doing general work, and thus closely noting life as it really is, had no such refuge I think he would be so cut within by the things he sees that he would be unfit for his trade. For the truth is, brethren, though we that are well-fed will never acknowledge it, life on this earth to the majority of earth's children, is but somber business. Three-fourths of all the colors that pass before a reporter's vision are gray; and of the rest is much scarlet, which in certain shades is worse. Cynicism, or surface cynicism at least, has its good uses in this trade; I have seen tender-hearted women that essayed to do general work come in from an assignment too much unstrung by what they had seen to

write their stories: which is bad business: for them and for the hard-driven city editor.

But in sharp relief to the depressing influences of the trade as they were loosed upon the beginner, was, in my time, the never-failing evidence of the essential goodness of the human heart that whenever it had a chance broke through a false system and revealed itself; a thing that probably all of us carried beneath our skins as an antidote to the necessary cynicism wherewith we fended upon the exterior. For instance, no New York newspaper ever appealed in behalf of any case of distress or suffering, great or small, without an instantaneous and generous response from the public. Let but a newspaper tell the story of a crippled newsboy that needs an artificial leg, and in a day enough money will be forthcoming to provide what is needed and make a surplus; let it but mention an old couple in distress anywhere, and the dollars come dropping into its net as from the sky: so much readier are men to relieve suffering than to consider the cause of it. I have raised in this way $1,000 in three days for a crippled widow whose only child had been crushed in the Park Place disaster, and never have I heard of such an appeal made in vain. And I used to wonder, as I saw this ready generosity, at a kindness that was so plainly universal and so responsive to every acute need and yet tolerated a condition of misery so chronic and black as the pall that darkened the vast hives of the east side.

But this habit of the public to send money to a newspaper on every appeal for charity had once an awkward consequence, as you are now to hear.

When we started the comic supplement of the Sunday *World* (the first of its kind, by the way) the inside pages were filled with jokes, sketches, and humorous stories that

later were discarded for the simpler efforts of the funny picture man. The bulk of this humor was supplied to us by the unfailing cleverness of Roy McCardle.

About that time Mary Mapes Dodge and other good souls of her order were earnestly engaged in forming children's organizations for the protection of birds, the elevation of the soul, and the practice of self-denying ordinances, such as those that would have youth look upon the succulent buckwheat and still say it nay. It occurred to McCardle that to parody and ridicule these somewhat pompous organizations would be good fun for the Sunday paper and he launched in his columns a thing called " The Kind Kids' Klub," in which the fervent appeals of the admirable Miss Dodge were uproariously burlesqued. As part of the labors of Reform was even then connected with the offertory, Mr. McCardle invariably ended his address to the Kind Kids' Klub with an appeal to his little friends to send two dollars to " your Uncle Tommyrot." One of these truly touching efforts still hanging upon my memory went like this:
(One of the Kind Kids speaks)

" I'm patient with my parents ;
Dumb beasts, I hurt them not ;
And I always send two dollars
To my Uncle Tommyrot.

To my Uncle Tommyrot,
To my Uncle Tommyrot,
Oh I always send two dollars
To my Uncle Tommyrot."

Which was followed by a prose exhortation (in burlesque) to the same noble employment.

This had not proceeded far when we were obliged for a

singular reason to divert Mr. McCardle's fertile wit into other channels. Persons began to take his invitation seriously and to send in two dollars each for the benefit of Uncle Tommyrot. Some few of these were plainly jesters having fun on their own account; but the majority were perfectly serious. They had hastily gathered the idea that the *World* was raising one of its customary funds for some sufferer and they proceeded half-mechanically to contribute, as a sleepy man in church may wake up when the collection plate is passed. They would have been astonished to know what acute embarrassment their philanthropy was causing in the *World* office. We had not the slightest idea what to do with the money that was coming in. We could not keep it, and, without obvious reflection upon the intelligence of the donors, we could not return it; besides, many of these, with the modesty that often attends charity, sent only initials, or signed under the good old disguise of "A Friend." Finally someone hit upon the expedient of bestowing the money upon the *Evening World's* Christmas Tree fund. First and last twenty-six persons were reached by Uncle Tommyrot's sad plight and the Christmas Tree fund was enriched by fifty-two dollars.

The Tale of Fickle Fortune

Patience, persistence, courage, a study of the work in hand, are doubtless potent factors in a reporter's success, but the wise man will never deny that sheer luck has also its place there.

Among the brilliant men on the New York *Herald's* staff twenty-five years ago was one that I shall bring upon my little stage under the name of George Henry Start. It was not his, but it is now quite good enough for

these purposes. In his case distinction as "one of the ten best," was not subject to carping query nor received with raised eyebrows; for in an office filled with able men he held for years the record for the longest weekly string. He was also the hero of many tales of the city room, having had his share of the kind of assignments that diversify life while they produce simoleons when the space is measured.

One of these had to do with old General William Tecumseh Sherman, titular hero of the celebrated March, who had among reporters a well-deserved reputation of being, for professional purposes, the toughest subject of the times. The general cherished a belief that he violently detested all newspapers and newspaper men, that for his part he never had been interviewed and never would be, and that fidelity to these convictions, which were quite erroneous, obliged him to simulate at times a prodigious rage and temper. When in New York he was usually at the old Fifth Avenue Hotel; because of his position in the army he was often sought by the newspapers; and one of his diversions was to allow a reporter to be sent up to his room and then to harry him forth with a terrific storm of invective.

He had other habits trying to the nerves of beginners in the newspaper way. One night he was standing in the rotunda of the hotel when a young reporter that had been sent to interview him approached at one side and began timidly to recite his errand. Without bestowing upon him so much as a glance the general squarely turned his back. The reporter sidled around until he was again upon the warrior's flank and started anew upon his story. Again Sherman turned his back upon him, and again the reporter edged around until he was abreast of an ear.

Then of a sudden and with a terrifying snort the warrior

bent himself upon the pale-faced youth and yelled in his ear:

"Oh, go to hell!"

The reporter waited not but fled to his office, which, I suppose, meant in his mind the same thing; particularly as he was about to appear without the story he had been sent to get.

Even the most experienced man in the service hated an assignment to see Sherman, for there was no known way of placating the old fire-brand, and Start groaned aloud one day when he found that the Fates had mixed this potion in his cup. It was a Washington despatch that did his business; something about army affairs on which the tough old gentleman that had led the troops through Georgia must be urged to talk. The tough old gentleman was as usual at the Fifth Avenue, in his accustomed room, and Start, on some vague impulse, thought he would take a chance on going up unannounced. For one thing, he expected to be thrown out and judged he might as well get through the operation quickly and go about an errand that might have profit in it.

When he arrived at the door he noticed that the transom was open and device came to assist him. He took out the paper that contained the Washington despatch, heavily marked the matter he was to ask about, and wrote on the margin in great letters:

"What have you to say about this?"

Then he tiptoed to the door, heaved the paper through the transom, and fled down the hall.

A tremendous explosion followed and then a hoarse laugh, and the door flew open. Start had stopped at the first turning with his head thrust out around the corner.

"Did you throw this into my room?" roared the general, holding up the paper.

"Yep," said Start, getting what the children call "a good ready" to continue his flight if need should arise.

"Well, come here, then," said Sherman, beckoning. "I want to see you."

So Start advanced, and the warrior said, with twinkling eyes:

"What did you do it for?"

"Why," said Start, "because the office sent me to ask you that question and I had to do it, and I didn't know any other way to ask it without having my head taken off."

Sherman fell into a chair, stretched out his legs before him, and roared with laughter.

"Well," he said, "I suppose I am a Tartar to you fellows, but hang it, what on earth do you keep on pestering me for?"

"Not because we like it, you bet," said Start. "But what are we going to do? We are ordered to ask you about these things and we've got to do it, and there isn't a man in the business that wouldn't rather charge guns like those at Atlanta."

Sherman rubbed his nose thoughtfully for a moment and then said:

"By George! I guess that's right. Sit down here now and tell me what it is you want to know."

So Start sat down and Sherman gave him a column and a half of a rattling interview, and Start got double rates and a hatful of compliments.

In his next conspicuous adventure his triumph was wholly fortuitous. Like this:

One of the leaders of the New York bar at that time was Colonel Richard Newcombe. He had a very hand-

some and clever daughter, who favored us one day by eloping with a man that her father had forbidden her to see—for no reason, apparently, but the lover's poverty. Here was a story that lacked nothing of the melodramatic flavor; for the father attempted to regain his daughter and to punish the bold lover and the bold lover proved to be as able and resourceful as he was bold. The successive installments of the narrative, therefore, were like the chapters of a serial novel.

Start covered this story for the *Herald* and contributed his share to the rich pabulum of romance on which our young lady readers were ecstatically feeding. After a time the story began to flag in interest and for a few days the developments were trivial. Start was working with the reporters for the old *Morning Journal* and the *Sun*. One night the case was so dull that he took a perilous chance and went to the theater with his wife, arranging to meet his co-laborers of the *Morning Journal* and the *Sun* at the celebrated drug store of Dr. Perry and obtain from them whatever their investigations might have yielded. After which he would burst into the *Herald* office as if fresh from the assignment and write the story, whatever it might be.

Well, of course, this was the night on which the big news broke, and only the *Sun* and the *Morning Journal* men had it. So when Start came from the theater he was surprised to get from them the best story of the series. He took down their notes, left his wife at the drug store to wait for him, bustled into the *Herald* office and was told to write a column. Which he did and went home.

The *Sun* man went to his office and the *Sun's* night city editor deemed the story too libelous to be safe. So the *Sun* man wrote nothing. The *Morning Journal* man went to his

office and reported and his night city editor, after being of two minds, ordered two sticks of a guarded statement, which the make-up man subsequently left out.

The *Herald* printed Start's story and when he came to the office the next day he was astounded to receive congratulations on all sides. He had beaten the town; he had scored the greatest " scoop " of the year; nobody else had a line of the story.

His name was immediately posted on the bulletin board, he received double rates for his exclusive, and when Mr. Bennett heard of the achievement he cabled over an additional prize.

Start bore his honors with becoming modesty, but there was one thing about his bearing that struck us as strange. In the city room clinic that we held daily while waiting for assignments he could never be induced to tell what maneuvers he used to land that great and famous beat.

Here are two illuminating phases of one reporter's career. I now offer a third.

Mr. Bennett had a rule that no man once a member of the staff could be discharged. In case of misconduct he could be suspended, but he could not be discharged. For some time the crop of libel suits that under our present libel laws no newspaper, however carefully conducted, can hope to avoid, had been unusually large. At least nine-tenths of these actions are without merit and ought never to be brought; but even the least of them is a sore annoyance to a publisher. Mr. Bennett was irritated by the apparent increase in these things, which to his mind indicated a growing carelessness on the part of the reporters. He therefore made another rule that when a libel judgment was rendered against the *Herald* the reporter that wrote the offending story should be suspended until his

salary or average space earnings should equal the amount of the judgment.

Start was then doing Wall Street. An extraordinary number of get-rich-quick schemers and swindlers were camped about the edges of the Street and Start went after them to dislodge them. In the course of this campaign he made an unfortunate slip and brought in an innocent firm.

The case was pretty flagrant and the firm obtained one of the largest libel judgments ever recorded in New York. Start had been with the paper twenty years, but there was no way to save him. He was told that he was under suspension until his average weekly space should amount to a sum equal to the judgment. He figured on this and found he would be suspended seven years and five months. Then he resigned.

The Tale of a Pipe Dream

The good old times are supposed to be the only times wherein things and people were what they ought to be, but I am certain nevertheless that in these present times the public is far wiser, more perceptive, and more discerning than it was twenty-five years ago; more sophisticated, too, if you like, but certainly of a readier and less naïve intelligence. To-day if anything can be gathered of the general attitude toward the press it is assuredly one of suspicion, but in my salad days the case was otherwise.

When the Scotch yacht Thistle came over here in 1887 to race for the America's cup a great and very foolish mystery was made about her. For some reason or other a certain part of the British public seems possessed of the belief that " American smartness " consists of fooling somebody and the only defense of the unfortunate alien is to fool

back. In no other way can one explain the remarkable performances with the Thistle, for no amount of mystery or concealment could add anything to the vessel's speed or affect a contest based so squarely on merit and physical fact.

But anyway, long before she left the other side the Thistle was heralded to us as a craft of a construction so strange, novel, and superior to anything previously known in designing that the cup was as good as won before the race started. The Glasgow newspapers and correspondents favored us with many alarming hints of the beating in store for us and of the truly marvelous device that had been added to the Thistle to complete our ruin. When the boat arrived at New York these notions were augmented because no one was allowed to go aboard of her, artists and reporters were driven with scant civility (or none) from her neighborhood, and all connected with her curtly refused to answer any questions or to indulge in the amenities common to civilized life. One result of which being the development of more bitter feeling than has ever attended any other contest for the cup.

When the Thistle was taken out of the water in the old East River drydock great sheets of canvas and tarpaulins were hung all about the dock so as to conceal her hull from every point of view, and all the work on her was done by her own sailors.

This set the general curiosity on edge. In the midst of the buzzing comments a story was cabled from Glasgow that the real secret of the Thistle's construction about which we had heard so much was a mystic device called an air cushion placed under her hull to make it extremely light. To retain the air in a position to support the hull a peculiar shaping of the underbody was said to have been invented

that did not interfere with speed but kept the air from escaping.

This narrative being widely reprinted here was accepted at its face value with the result that the imagination of the average man was sadly strained to think how air could be confined on a ship's bottom and still allow the ship noticeably to travel. Yet we were assured that the ingenious Scotch builder had settled this difficulty and when the contending boats should come up to the line we should be prepared to see the Thistle sail off on her air cushions as upon the wings of a bird, while the poor old Volunteer should be left wallowing.

The Thistle was now anchored off Tompkinsville and so carefully guarded night and day that not an alien soul could get near to her. At this point one of the *World's* bright young men thought of a scheme. He hired a barge and anchored it in the Thistle's vicinity, apparently for dredging purposes. Then one night he went down with a diver in a diver's suit. And he got under the Thistle's bottom and spent hours in examining every streak of it with his hands. And soon after the *World* was able to announce to its readers that the wonderful hull of the Thistle was exactly like the hull of any other vessels and the only "air cushions" were hot and existed in the brains of the Glasgow correspondents.

And on the day of the first race, behold, old Hank Haff steered the Volunteer up to the starting line. And as she went over he shook out her forestaysail and slung a sign over the rudder that read, "Keep Astern." And that was where the Thistle kept all through the race. And when Haff went over the finish line and instantly took in all his kites the Thistle had kept so far astern that she was not anywhere in sight.

Perhaps an ingenious correspondent could work off now some such dream as the Thistle's air cushions and make people believe it, but I have my doubts.

The Tale of a Quart of Pi

The ablest newspaper commander I knew in a long service in many offices, the most resourceful strategist and the most courageous captain on a hard-fought field was William C. Reick, now president of the New York *Sun* Company and for many years the city editor of the New York *Herald.* I served for a long time as his first assistant. There are mighty few generals that can continue to look big to the second in command, but the more I saw of Reick at close range the more I was obliged to acknowledge his strong traits. It was not alone that he always had himself in hand; a merely imperturbable man is of no use to lead a newspaper battle. In that contest the general must have not only the cool and steady head but enough feeling, enthusiasm, and sympathy to inspire the corps. Otherwise he will not lead them to anything. No one ever saw Mr. Reick swept off his feet, but he had also the magnetism and the verve that produce results from a newspaper staff.

The *Herald* used to make a great stunt of the gathering of election returns, which it did on a system of peculiar efficiency devised by Thomas G. Alvord, afterward Assistant Librarian of Congress. In 1894 we had in both state and city extremely close and exciting contests. In the city was revolt against Tammany and in the state against the old Hill machine. I had charge of the returns from the city; another executive managed the returns from the state. On election night, we were a little slow about getting to press, which was bad, for the orders for extra papers were enormous; but at last everything was away except one

page, which was waiting for the great state table, the device that showed the returns from each county.

Mr. Reick was in general charge. We were all in the composing room waiting (in agony of spirit) for that one table. Space had been accurately measured for it; every other line of type was in position, every column had been justified; the foreman, the make-ups, and the rest of us went boiling up and down with impatience, waiting for that table. At last it came; two men seized it to lift it into position at the head of the waiting page; every eye was intent upon them as they slowly raised the type from the galley and brought it gingerly upright into position above the form.

And then the center dropped out of it and the whole thing fell clattering upon the form, that much miserable pi.

I seemed to swoon, while the room went around me like a balloon. A make-up man shrieked aloud; Manny Geary, the famous *Herald* foreman, turned as white as his shirt and fell against the imposing stone. A great gasp went up from every man there except one; a kind of a long-drawn cuss-word wrung from overwrought souls—from all except Mr. Reick. Without an exclamation, a quaver of excitement in his voice, or a sign of dismay in his face he said instantly:

"Clear it away! Now put in this and this," (swiftly indicating items on the galleys). "Close it up. Send it away." In another moment the form was on the stereotyper's table. A man whose nerves were perfectly steady at such a moment was born with the gift of command, which amounts to a sixth sense and is rarer than the okapi.

The Tale of the Extra Compositors

From the point of view of the newspaper proprietor Joseph Pulitzer was the unequaled wizard and wonder

worker, but even he like other men was a compound of strength and weakness. One of his weak points was the belief, besetting him after his eyes failed him, that he could find another newspaper maker like himself. In the pursuit of this phantom, he was much engaged in drawing what is called talent from other offices instead of trying to develop it in his own. The result was that the *World* was conducted for a time by a procession of managing editors that walked in at the front door, got out an issue or two, disappeared in the rear, and were seen no more.

In this line came one that had been managing editor of the *Herald* and was really of fine mind, and when he had a chance to operate according to the bent of his own humor, of good ability. He had been a great reporter, had written some of the most famous stories in newspaper annals, and was exactly suited to the *Herald* but not at all to the *World.* Let us call him Mr. Goodman.

Mr. Bennett, the proprietor of the *Herald,* lived in Europe and while he kept in close touch with his journal he was not well informed about changing conditions in the newspaper world. In his search for talent Mr. Pulitzer was steadily driving up salaries and Mr. Bennett did not know that fact. Among the men to whom Mr. Pulitzer made overtures was Mr. Goodman of the *Herald.* Mr. Goodman was not eager to change his base to the *World* office, but he naturally thought the occasion propitious for an adjustment of his salary relations to his job. When he mentioned this view to Mr. Bennett he was grieved and astonished to find that it touched no sympathetic chord in his employer's bosom. Whereupon Mr. Goodman accepted Mr. Pulitzer's offer and went over to steer the *World* ship.

A few days later some of Mr. Bennett's friends were

condoling with him on losing a managing editor so able and famous. "Too bad, Mr. Bennett," said they. "How can you ever replace him?"

This annoyed Mr. Bennett, who had his own views about the existence of the indispensable man.

"Nonsense!" said he. "Any man can fill that position. I'll make my stenographer managing editor. I'll make the baseball reporter managing editor. It is no trick to get a managing editor."

He came near to fulfilling his threat, too. He abolished the post of managing editor and created a new position, that of news editor to have charge of cable and telegraph news and nothing else, and into this place he put first the office stenographer, and then the baseball reporter, both of whom justified the soundness of his judgment by discharging with ability the duties of their new office. It is to be remarked in passing that the *Herald* has never had a managing editor from that day to this, and so far as I could discover never needed one.

In the *World* office Mr. Goodman came upon uncomfortable quarters. Every commander stepping in this way from one deck to another finds his new position bristling with difficulties. Some arise from personal jealousies, some from the hostility of the crew, and some from the critical attitude of the ownership, always looking for miracles. Mr. Goodman had his fill of all of these.

We were then passing through what may be termed the Bedlam period of New York journalism. Human ingenuity had been all but exhausted in devising typographical and other eccentricities with which to diversify the pages and torment the readers. Thus, for a time, the rule was that every story must begin with an exclamation in a single word or a single line. If of a murder, for instance, it usually

began with the single word, "Blood!" set in a lonely shriek at the head of the column. If of a fire it began similarly with "Flames!" If of a railroad collision it began with "Smash!" or "Crash!" And so on. I grieve to state that so far as the records show the lunatic that devised this scheme seems to have escaped his deserts here in this life, but I doubt not the bitter recompense that awaited him upon another shore.

When this species of madness had been carried to a point where indignant readers seemed likely to raid the offices, it was followed with a rule that every story should begin with a famous literary quotation. While this lasted we wore out in our office seven copies of Bartlett and the hair of the night city editor turned gray. Next we wrote all the heads in rhyme. Then we experimented with different kinds of typographical jim-jams until nothing seemed to be left except that we should set the paper upside down while the members of the staff should stand in Broadway on their heads and wriggling their toes. I was going to suggest this to my managing editor once, only I restrained myself.

While the delirium was at its height a famous executive on one of the papers, starting upstairs from the street to his office, heard one urchin newsboy yell to another:

"You bet your life we are the stuff!"

The phrase, one of the commonest and stupidest in street slang, echoed in his mind as he went up the stairs, keeping pace with his footsteps in a kind of devilish rhythm, and the next morning that journal bested all its competitors in the lunacy race by bristling over with this line set in full face and inserted between every two items:

"You bet your life we are the stuff!"

This lasted two or three days. Then the line appeared

in the same way but translated into German, then into French, then into Italian, and so on until every language in Europe had been ransacked and the genius in charge had begun on the tongues of Asia.

In newspaper circles at the time this was regarded as a great hit. I do not know how I can better indicate the depths to which we had fallen.

Over in the *World* office, Mr. Pulitzer insisted on ideas, novelties, and suggestions from his executives, so that a great rivalry to shine thus in his sight grew up among some of them, and one at least adopted the custom of keeping a book in which he recorded every suggestion he made that none might steal his credit. The pressure for suggestions and novelties was now applied to Mr. Goodman, and in one case, certainly, with somewhat peculiar results.

It was just at the time of the historic Pigott disclosures in London, when the case that the London *Times* and the English Tories had worked up against Parnell and the Irish Nationalists came to the ground with such a memorable crash. On the night when Parnell's vindication became overwhelming and complete, Mr. Goodman recalled to mind the famous achievement of the managing editor that listened to the inspired words of the street urchin, and he issued an order that every article and every item in the whole paper, big or little, and no matter what the nature thereof, should end with the exclamation,

"A Great Day for Ireland!"

It was tempting Fate itself to do such a thing and of course the inevitable happened. One Hennessey, the janitor of a public building in Brooklyn, playing on the top floor with his children, fell over the railing of the air well and was killed. "A Great Day for Ireland!" Grim old Recorder Smythe had before him a notorious burglar

called O'Shaughnessy and sentenced him to sixty-five years in Sing Sing. "A Great Day for Ireland!" The body of a floater in the East River was identified as that of a worthy citizen named Patrick Doolan. "A Great Day for Ireland!" James Kelley and Michael O'Brien were arrested for fighting on a coal barge, and O'Brien was found to be so battered they had to take him to Bellevue to get him sewed together in one piece. "A Great Day for Ireland!" William Mulrooney, a well-known philanthropist of the east side, choked to death on a chicken-bone. "A Great Day for Ireland!"

So we plugged along at the desk, obeying orders, adding to every item the required line, and waiting for the storm, for the poorest prognosticator in the office could detect an area of low pressure at hand. Colonel John A. Cockerill, usually an amiable gentleman but having withal a short temper, was the editor-in-chief of the paper. He usually came in about ten o'clock at night, called for his proofs, and proceeded to write whatever editorial comment was indicated by the night's news.

About ten o'clock we heard him throw open the office doors and swing along to his room, calling out as he went:

"Boy! Bring my proofs!"

The boy brought them and the rest of us clung to our desks while we listened for what should come next. In a few minutes we heard a low rumble like the sound of distant thunder, then a rapid fire discharge of expletives, then a reverberating roar, and Colonel Cockerill burst out of his room with a handful of proofs and shouting at the top of his voice:

"What in perdition! What in the blue —— ——! Who has done this? Show me the man! Let me get my hands on him! Where is the maniac! Show him to me!"

The night city editor ran up and apologetically explained the orders that had been given. Colonel Cockerill scarcely listened.

"I don't care who said so! Take them all out! I won't have one of them in the paper. Take them all out, I say!" And he stamped out to the composing room, where we could hear his powerful voice roaring imprecations and orders.

Those were the days of hand-set type. The offending lines were, in many instances, run into the articles and items. Probably a hundred of them had been set up when Colonel Cockerill arrived. To take them out was a colossal task. An urgency call was sent out and extra compositors secured. But for all their labors six of the lines appeared in the first edition and informed its readers that it was "A Great Day for Ireland." I can assure you some anxious and painful searchings were required to get these out before the second edition went to press.

It was the anticlimax of freaking and laid freaking low for seven years.

The Tale of Eugene Field and the Chicago "Tribune"

The Spanish-American war made a memorable chapter in newspaper history, chiefly because of the enormous expenditures it caused. Nothing that ever had been reported anywhere on earth cost so much money to cover. I was an executive in the Hearst service and we had at one time under charter for the purpose of getting the news of that war, five tugs and steamers, besides Mr. Hearst's own yacht and another he had hired. One of the steamers was a Red Cross liner and another was a Brazilian freighter. The

Caribbean is a rough place to be knocking around in any small vessel, and the difficulties of news gathering were in other ways very great. For one thing the field of operations extended over the entire West Indies, and at almost any of the islands in the archipelago a story might come to port.

In these conditions, as will be readily understood, when a newspaper succeeded in getting a despatch of any importance, to have it lifted by a rival and calmly reproduced as original caused some bitterness of spirit. Yet this is a practice most of the newspapers were engaged in then and are now. In plain terms, they helped themselves to anything they fancied in their neighbors' chicken coops, and still do so. Indeed, to the philosopher it must be ever a matter for curious speculation that we in our editorial columns daily thunder for the strictest honesty and with brow severe condemn the wrong-doer, and then employ experts to filch news out of one another's first editions.

On ordinary occasions this species of rapine, being more or less reciprocal, passes without much comment; but the case of war news obtained at so heavy a cost was different. Newspapers or news agencies that were spending little or perhaps nothing to cover the events were cheaply providing themselves with the fruits of enterprise and liberality.

One day a little group of us was talking with Mr. Hearst about these things, and clever Arthur McEwen (he's dead now, rest his soul; was never a better man in journalism) suggested that a plot should be laid to catch some poacher on the news preserves. Doubt was expressed as to whether this could be successfully done, whereupon I was reminded of a long-forgotten story.

About 1885, when Field was conducting his famous "Sharps and Flats" column in the Chicago *Daily News*,

that paper was much annoyed by this same practice of pilfering, sometimes from its first editions, and sometimes, in a mysterious way, from its proofs. Every beat being thus burglarized before it appeared, enterprise was useless and prescience a farce.

"Leave it to me," said Field when this situation was explained to him. Matthew Arnold had been recently on a tour through America and had returned to England. Field faked an exceedingly clever interview with Arnold in which the author told in his peculiar style of his experiences in this country and gave out some recondite and not complimentary views about Chicago and other cities. This stuff Field pretended had just appeared in the *Pall Mall Journal* and now purported to be cabled to the *News* by its London correspondent. It was done so perfectly that almost any editor might fall for it; only there was no such paper as the *Pall Mall Journal.* This was put into type and a proof of it hung up with the other office proofs; but the night editor was warned and the matter omitted in the make-up.

That same morning the Chicago *Tribune* bloomed on its first page with Field's concoction published as genuine, and adorned with a large head. It began thus:

> (Special Cable Despatch to the Chicago *Tribune.*)
>
> London, Nov. 18.—The *Pall Mall Journal* prints today a remarkable interview with Mr. Matthew Arnold on his recent visit to America. Mr. Arnold being asked what he thought of Chicago, said:

And then followed the rest of the Field fake.

In other words, the constable had descended upon the chicken coop and nailed the pilferer with a fat pullet in

his hand. The next morning the *News* and Field, (with his biting sarcasm,) made the *Tribune* the laughing-stock of the country.

The Tale of a Renowned Hero

McEwen was much taken with this story. He retired to his room for a time and returned with a beautiful little despatch from Cardenas, "Special to the *Morning Journal* —from a staff correspondent," telling of a sharp bombardment of the Spanish batteries there. He had been careful to look up the American warships that were in that vicinity, and as such actions were of frequent occurrence and as he managed the details with consummate skill the thing was extremely plausible. Repeatedly in despatches from the seat of war the charge had been made that German and Austrian artillery officers were assisting the Spaniards. Down in the middle of his story McEwen worked in the announcement that among the dead on the Spanish side was "Colonel Reflipe W. Thenuz, a gallant and distinguished Austrian officer of artillery," who was fatally wounded by a shell while directing the Spanish guns.

We printed this the next morning. To tell the truth, none of us had much hope that it would land anything, but, behold, the *Evening World* promptly picked it up, made it into a "Special Despatch from our Staff Correspondent" and added, to our joy, a neat touch of perfection by dating the thing "On board the *World's* tug Dauntless," or some such name. There it was, McEwen's fake as he had written it, conveying with other intelligence the sad news of the death of "Colonel Reflipe W. Thenuz" that "gallant and distinguished Austrian officer of artillery."

The next day the morning edition of the *World* kindly

reprinted the same despatch still from its staff correspondent and still dated "On board the *World's* tug Dauntless," and again the melancholy tidings about Colonel Thenuz, that gallant and distinguished warrior, was vouchsafed to mankind.

But over in our office there was no melancholy, but only glad shouts of joy. McEwen's cleverness had landed the fish; not the fish we had started for, because the *World* was not our aim, but still a fish and a good one. "Reflipe W. Thenuz" was an anagram, which being properly arranged read thus:

"We pilfer the news."

You may be sure that succeeding issues of our paper did not fail to impress the facts upon the public.

Indeed, we had done far more than we imagined, for we had made the "gallant and distinguished officer" the real hero of the war. Not Hobson, not Schley, not Dewey himself achieved a modicum of the renown that fell upon the redoubtable Colonel Thenuz. The story of the exploit that gave him to fame was printed first in almost every American newspaper. Then it crossed the Atlantic and the French journals took it up, finding in it a flavor delicate to the Gallic taste. Seeing that our gallant and distinguished champion was likely to become an international figure we subscribed in his behalf to a Paris clipping bureau whose service covered the world. I had the clippings on their arrival brought to my desk and thus was able to follow (with always increasing amazement) the far wanderings of our hero. He went through France amid applause and laughter. He was translated into Italian and convulsed the peninsula. He was taken up by the German press and enthusiastically welcomed in his native Austria. He journeyed to the northland and appeared in Norway, Sweden,

Denmark, and Finland. In St. Petersburg and Moscow he scored notably. He was translated into Hungarian, Roumanian, and Turkish. He moved eastward along the Trans-Siberian, and in marvelous garb appeared in that newspaper published in the heart of central Siberia, the *Hoboe Something or Other,* I never could get the whole title straight. With every foreign mail came fresh hundreds of clippings showing his advance around the world. Wonderful languages and dialects were strained to celebrate his glory. Lithuanian, Lettish, Egyptian—journals from the remote corners of the earth related his untimely death. In South Africa he shone resplendent; in Australia he was deservedly popular. But whether amid the dots and dashes of Hindustanee or the quaint curves of Burmese I could usually make out "Colonel Reflipe W. Thenuz, a gallant and distinguished officer," and the explanation of the anagram. A year after the treaty of peace had been signed and the war had begun to be forgotten, the clippings continued to accumulate upon my desk and the battle-scarred Colonel to move through the uttermost parts of the earth.

Then they stopped and I concluded that the gallant old soldier had at last been laid to rest. Another year went by and we in the office had clean forgotten him when there came to my desk a clipping from a newspaper at Geneva, Switzerland, telling the whole story anew. By what chance it had thus been revived I know not, but at any rate off dashed the gallant Colonel upon a fresh round of travels. Again he moved through France, Germany, Scandinavia, Russia, the Near and the Far East; again the *Hoboe Something* sounded the trump of his fame. A new set of journals that before had missed the glory of his great deed and the tragedy of his taking off now wreathed his name with laurels ever fresh. Again amid the marvels of strange

speech I could make out "Colonel Reflipe W. Thenuz, a gallant and distinguished officer," and I knew that the editor was explaining the anagram and the joke, now by the banks of the Irrawaddy and now "where Nile reflects the endless length of dark red colonnades," or words to that effect.

In all more than two thousand clippings on this subject comprised my collection and three years had passed before they ceased to accumulate. Even now I doubt not that occasionally in the pathless regions of far Cathay the ghost of the gallant and distinguished officer stalks through the columns of some provincial journal and the readers thereof are inducted into the mystery of his anagram and the story of his lamentable passing. Few men of this generation have in a lifetime achieved the celebrity he won in an hour; and if to divert the world with innocent amusement be a service, his sponsors, who are also his admirers, may look upon his career with some satisfaction, for millions have read of him with laughter.

XVI

THE ART OF REPORTING

After a newspaper experience of more than twenty-five years that had at one end the post of deputy assistant mailing clerk and at the other the post of publisher, I can, in the manner of the esteemed Chevalier Burke, place my hand upon my heart and declare that the best job on earth is that of the city editor of a New York daily.

Other employments are but rubbish in comparison. The life of an editor-in-chief is as dun as the plains in winter; a publisher is no more than a high-priced lackey with two masters; the editorial writer emits great thoughts for the exclusive perusal of the proof reader, who is paid for the same; the managing editor is largely a figure of ornament; the business manager consorts with the powers of evil. But the city editor, if he knows his business and has the others properly cowed, is the real captain of the ship, the only person in the establishment that has any real power, and the only producer of results. Nothing is of any importance to his newspaper except that it shall have circulation in New York City, and if such circulation is attained the city editor must furnish the greater part of the achievement. On him falls necessarily the brunt of the problem, for the reason that a New York constituency cares for little except New York. The typical New Yorker is skeptical about any region west of Hoboken or east of Far Rockaway; and even if it exists he has no interest in it. He

is the man that the newspaper must please, if it is to succeed, and the city editor is hired to meet and supply that necessity. It is a task likely to keep him from falling asleep at his desk.

Moreover, the city editor is an artist. As a painter before his easel so sits every day the city editor before the paper he is to make. Here in his hand he holds all the colors of all the news of the day; upon his schedule as upon canvas he lays them to suit the taste before mentioned. He can lay on the crimes and give to his paper a red hue; he can develop the humorous side of a day's life in the city; he can seize a story in low tones from the heart of the lost and found advertisements; he can work out every contrast of scarlet and purple, for every variety of tint is supplied by the events before him. He has but to choose, to combine, and to study the results. And all the time he can derive from his weavings the satisfaction that pertains only to the exercise of art, which is now and always a means to transfer a feeling.

Provided, to be sure, he is blessed with reporters that in their turn have the instinct of the artistic craftsman; for when reporting is true and free from the taint of advertising and the business office and allowed to deal according to its principles, it is an admirable art. Far more surely than the dramatist or the novelist the reporter can hold the mirror up to nature, if he be encouraged thereto. Take a typical newspaper and if it could be freed of its advertising and balance sheet influence and so left pure as a daily record of life, we should have the highest type of literature. This is not my opinion but the deliberate judgment of excellent critics, including one so judicious as Moncure D. Conway. The difference between reporting for such a newspaper and reporting for the bargain

counter may seem wide, but it lies not in the art of reporting but in the use to which the art is put; and in the end not even bargain counters may prevail against art.

The singular felicity befell me to have, as city editor of the New York *World* for three years, beginning with 1894, a staff of reporters to whose worth, character, and skill no words of mine could do justice. It is common for commanders to think well of their forces, but what I shall say of the *World's* staff is far beyond any tradition of that kind, and shall consist chiefly of records that speak for themselves. I believe it was the greatest staff that ever worked upon any newspaper; certainly it contained the greatest number of young men and young women that subsequently distinguished themselves in letters. Among the reporters were David Graham Phillips, who afterward attained the front rank among American novelists; Maximilian Foster, now famous as a short story writer and the author of widely read novels; Rudolph Block, who, as "Bruno Lessing," is the favorite writer of stories of the Ghetto; Alexander C. Kenealey, now editor of the London *Mirror* and the author of two very successful books; Hartley Davis, magazinist, dramatist, short story writer, and one of the ablest of critics; Roy L. McCardle, known to all lovers of humor; Samuel S. Fontaine, now an acknowledged authority on great financial subjects; Joseph B. Eakins, who wrote "How Old Folks Won the Derby"; Marie Manning, author of "Lord Allington, Bankrupt," "Judith of the Plains," and a host of fascinating short stories; Anne O'Hagan, poet and distinguished short story writer; Reginald Foster, successful as a writer of magazine articles; Olivia Howard Dunbar, a brilliant critic and essayist, author of "Pierre Vidal"; Jacob Dreyfus, the unequaled producer of genre sketches of the east side; Wil-

liam O. Inglis, whose travel sketches and articles are familiar to all readers of *Harper's;* Arthur Greaves, now city editor of the New York *Times;* Bayard Veiller, author of "Within the Law," one of the greatest plays of recent years. Arthur Brisbane was a special writer on local topics; Charles H. Meltzer wrote the music criticisms; E. F. Coward, the adapter of "The Belle's Stratagem," was the dramatic critic.

Elsewhere than in the city room, too, we were a distinguished company. Elizabeth Jordan, now editor of *Harper's Bazaar* and the author of many popular novels, was in charge of the woman's page. Joseph Altschuler, author of "The Sun of Saratoga," and the best writer of boy's books we have had in this generation, was a member of the staff. George Cary Eggleston wrote most of the editorials. E. Z. Van Zile did the paragraphing.

At the same time the art department, under the direction of Charles Mortimer, was likewise gathering extraordinary material. Artists, since famous as great book illustrators, such as George Kerr, Harry Marchand, W. O. Wilson, Walter Bobbett, August Weil, and Julius Firemen, were on the art staff at this time, and some of them began as illustrators of fires, or maybe prize fights, under Papa Mortimer's kindly eye, the careers that have since been so brilliant.

Calling to mind now the high character of the men and women I knew in journalism, I am moved to dissent in this place from a popular belief about the craft in general. In many a mouth that speaks with little knowledge of these matters, or with none, the inaccuracy of reporters is a favorite phrase. It is an inaccuracy that in almost every instance can be traced, when it exists at all, to a commercial degradation of a thing in itself good and true. Genuine

reporting aims to reproduce the original event for the eyes and understanding of the reader. If the event be not worth the reproducing it does not strive to create imaginary scenes, details, nor incidents. The assertion may be received with incredulity, but is quite true, nevertheless; for the reason that imaginary embroideries are never necessary. Anything that is worth writing about in a newspaper has in its veritable aspects enough of human interest, if one will but look upon it attentively. Superficial observation, finding nothing that smites it with a bill-hook, falls to faking, which is not reporting at all but mere laziness and slovenliness. Whether truth is stranger than fiction I do not pretend to say, but I know it is always better than fiction. I remember now an instance related to me by Abraham Cahan, the creator of the great Jewish daily, *Forward,* and long a star reporter in New York. An old man had committed suicide; his violin lay upon his bed. Faking reporters imagined a story of an old violinist that found his fingers becoming too stiff to play his beloved instrument and so killed himself. This made what is called a good story: of the kind. Cahan rejected fiction and went patiently to discover the truth. He learned that the man was an artisan that all his life had cherished the ambition to play the violin. He worked and saved and gathering a little competence set out to realize his ambition. He engaged an instructor and took many lessons and then discovered that he could not learn to play. That was the real reason why he had killed himself and made a story far better than the other. For one thing it had the subtle art values that pertain only to what is true. No matter how clever the faking it can never command those values, which, after all, are the ultimate goal of writing as of painting.

After verjuiced remarks about the reporters of San Francisco, or some of them, Robert Louis Stevenson concluded that all in all they were good lads, more sinned against than sinning. It is a true word. Everywhere the reporter is the victim of conditions he is powerless to affect and of a condemnation he never deserved. Those that have seen him at his work will need no defense of him; others I beg to assure seriously that the genuine reporter is not a prying person, seeking to injure reputations or to desecrate privacy. Strange as it may seem to the outsider, he is most often of rather unusual sensibilities; sometimes launched, inwardly protesting, upon a painful errand, but never callous to the consequences of publicity; and (in spite of accepted tradition) not often so eager to get something to write that he will readily accept lies as truth. Against this latter monstrous injustice I enter a solemn protest. The history of New York journalism contains an interminable list of names that refute it. Let me make this plain. When I was a reporter, a certain group of practitioners of our art was regarded by all of us with profound respect. Day after day as we sat in the city room waiting for assignments, we were wont to discuss the relative merits of the stories these men had written that day, awarding the palm for conspicuous excellence. Amos Cummings, S. S. Carvalho, Julian Ralph, John R. Spears, Ernest Chamberlain, W. J. Chamberlain, all of the *Sun;* David Graham Phillips, Arthur Greaves, Isaac D. White, Jonas Whitley, of the *World;* George Spinney, W. J. K. Kenney, Earl H. Berry, Tracy Bronson, of the *Times;* James Clancy, Thomas G. Alvord, Robert Hunt Lyman, Harry Brown, of the *Herald;* Ervin Wardman of the *Tribune;* George Foster of the *Star,* were (at different times) the reporters upon whom younger men looked as

upon models. But note, please, that each of these men was as far above faking as he was above personal dishonor in his relations with other men; each had the faith in the dignity and worth of his art that I have tried to describe here; each was successful; each rose subsequently to high positions. I am compelled to regard that fact as conclusive and utterly refuting the traditional conception that does so much injustice to a useful profession.

Many instances of that injustice will come at once to the mind of every experienced newspaper man. I shall cite but one, and it will be one that to the judicious will seem, I think, conclusive.

After all, the greatest source of actual inaccuracy in the average newspaper is the thing, chiefly intangible but always powerful, that is called the office policy, or general steering chart for the guidance of the executives, great and small. Of this the palpable part, in my time, consisted of a list of "Don'ts" that the night city editor kept in a drawer of his desk, handy for reference. It contained the names of persons that were not to be mentioned in print, of persons of whom nothing unpleasant was to be said, of institutions or corporations that were to be treated tenderly, and of causes to which the newspaper was committed.

But far more important than these was the general understanding, based in part upon the tone of the editorials, in part upon verbal messages, and more rarely upon written instructions, as to what the proprietary powers behind the machine really desired. A philosopher might reflect with some amusement that these intimations, when they reached the men that pulled upon the ropes, took always the shape of moral obligations. Thus, if a citizen were trying to lead some movement of civic reform and the ultimate powers were, for whatsoever reason, opposed to the movement, the

word would be passed along that the reformer was a "skate" and unworthy of confidence and therefore our newspaper "took no stock in him." If a strike occurred on the street railroads and the ultimate powers were on the side of the companies (as they usually were for a reason sufficient to themselves) the word would be that the leaders of the strike were dishonest and grafters and we were opposed to such men because they deceived honest labor. If a corporation were under fire and the ultimate powers sympathized with it, the word would be that the men attacking the corporation were of bad character and actuated by merely selfish aims. If a public man were in disfavor with us it was because of his moral failings, not revealed by the chart-makers but assumed to be well understood by all the wise. "We don't go much on him, you know," would be the fullest extent of the comment, but it would be ample to secure the desired results; it indicated "the policy." At all times we were required to treat tenderly certain great advertisers, but the reason was not alleged to be that they were advertisers but only that they were friends of ours. The time came when if an elevator fell in a department store that was "a friend of ours" we omitted all mention of the fact, no matter what might have been the casualties. In such a case the chart-makers could hardly be blamed for insisting upon the attitude of friendliness. Because of a chance sentence in a reporter's story the great dry goods house of O'Neill withdrew its advertising from the *Herald* and remained out for several years.

The results of the policy-chart would be a paragraph added, a phrase turned, a point emphasized, another point obscured, a certain meaning injected into a headline, a certain impression upon the mind of the reader not jus-

tified by the facts; and to anyone that happened to know the truth an indelible conclusion of inaccuracy.

For all of this the reporter was blamed by the uninformed public: for all of it he had no more responsibility than the smallest cog wheel in one of the presses.

This is no essay upon the principles of journalism, but while I linger on agreeable memories, let me continue to insist that, free from commercial interference and left to itself, reporting is nevertheless a high form of art. And to that end I now cite a conclusive illustration. Take interviewing. To be a good interviewer demands a knowledge and skill beyond the ready belief of a layman. The fundamentals of successful interviewing go down to the roots of human nature; its complex difficulties can be solved only by those that are willing to study life with enthusiastic and unflagging zeal.

To mention but one point, few of us are aware of the fact that no conversation is ever represented accurately whether in novels, short stories, or newspapers. It cannot be. In actual life human beings audibly transfer intelligence with words, grunts, ejaculations, incomplete sentences, ragged phrases, ungrammatical and wandering speech, and a vast multiplication of needless words, supplemented with signs, gestures, and facial expressions that often contain the greater significance. If you could see an exact stenographic reproduction of any conversation, even among highly educated persons, you would be astonished to observe through what Saharas of words trickle what streamlets of ideas. We have, in fact, two languages, spoken language and written language, and not without disaster can one attempt to confuse them.

A newspaper cannot reproduce exactly a conversation with a man it is interviewing because in the first place it

has no room for such a flood of verbiage, and in the next place it would be in print uninteresting even if intelligible. Every word that is pertinent and valuable the interviewed one will wrap in an integument of a thousand words of bosh. An interviewer that knows his business will understand this. He knows also that to get his man into the exact mood wherein he will be interesting and profitable requires tact, patience, and often a delicate maneuvering. In this process will be uttered thousands of words of not the slightest use to the paper or its readers. The master interviewer must seize in his mind the exact instant at which his subject began to say something worth while, and he must carry in his memory that utterance and all others of similar value. In his memory, because to make a visible memorandum or to exhibit a note book is fatal to successful interviewing. No man ever talks easily and naturally, revealing his true self and true thought, before the disconcerting battery of paper and pencil. Carrying thus every salient point in his mind the interviewer must reveal in perhaps a thousand words of true and characteristic phrases the vital essence of a conversation that consumed, let us say, an hour. To do that and do it well taxes the best skill of the best trained mind.

The real art of interviewing is not known outside of the United States and even here is falling into disuse. English interviewers, who in my experience have been painstaking and painsgiving persons, either take the whole conversation in shorthand or make elaborate notes of the points. Either process is deadly. In the first case, since no newspaper can print the whole thing, three-fourths of what you say is cut out and always contains your only remarks that are fairly intelligible. In the other case you are treated the next morning to such convincing exposition of your im-

becility as drives you to despair. But the master interviewer stands by the side of the verbal torrent, snaring the occasional utterance that is worth while and snaring it whole. These, one after another, he stores. Then at the end of an agreeable conversation he goes away and puts together the good things you have said and omits the trivial. And these good things he dresses in the manner of written speech, which is the only manner you yourself will tolerate when you come to read your thoughts in type. For type makes all the difference in the world.

In all this the interviewer that has mastered his art is never exposed to the danger of inaccuracy, but under certain conditions he may be exposed to the charge of it. Some public men have a habit of denying an interview whenever they find adverse comment upon its utterances. Blame the reporter: he cannot defend himself. Others deliberately use the interview as a means of testing public sentiment; if the views advanced are well received, good: if not, the vile interviewer misquoted me. It is a cowardly trick, but common. We have had a governor of the state of New York, and one over much given to moral platitudes, whose habit of denying interviews was so fixed upon him that the Associated Press would never receive any statement from him except in the presence of two of its representatives. Yet for all these perils I can cite master interviewers that in long careers have never known the accuracy of one of their interviews to be questioned.

You see the requirement is for care, deliberation, study, and the conscience of the artist; in interviewing and in all other phases of true reporting. The common conception of the reporter as a harum-scarum, irresponsible person with soiled cuffs and the lees of last night's drunk still upon him is a caricature as gross as the European cartoonist's

conception of the typical American. Every profession is entitled to be judged by its best. I have known scores of reporters in my time so scrupulous about the least inaccuracy, so careful of their walk and habit, so convinced in every way of the theory I am advancing, and so unwavering in practicing it that in view of the work they actually performed the caricature I have mentioned becomes preposterous. These men were artists; true reporting is always an art. Reporting for the sake of producing scare heads to sell newspapers and get advertising is not an art but a species of blackmail. Real reporting demands concentration, devotion, incessant vigilance, a high sense of responsibility, with the faculties of analysis and synthesis in constant play; the other kind one can do with one's feet. In my time, at least, the man that rose to the front rank of the profession was one that gave to his assignments such study as the conscientious lawyer gives to a difficult law case; the haphazard man never got anywhere. The conscientious man kept his mind alert for every point; the haphazard man took what fell in his way.

And now I think of two or three incidents from a mass in my collection that illustrate concisely the qualities that make good reporting. One of the best reporters I have known was Charles W. Tyler of the old New York *Sun* staff in the famous days when John Bogart was city editor. He was once assigned to a puzzling murder mystery at Hackettstown, New Jersey. The body of a young woman had been found in a field just outside of the town; she had been strangled, but evidently not on the spot; the body had been dragged to the place where it lay. She had been a resident of the town, quite well known, and respected. No clew was to be deduced from her associates, habits, or antecedents, and she had not been murdered for robbery.

A reward was offered for the arrest of the murderer and some experienced detectives took up the case; every New York newspaper sent a reporter. Tyler worked alone; the others, following a custom that was gradually growing up, worked in company. Several days passed without light upon the mystery. The newspapers and the detectives gave up the case. On the last day Tyler came back to New York with one of the detectives. They walked together from the ferry house to Park Row, where the *Sun* office was. There Tyler bade his companion good-by, whipped around the corner back to the ferry house, and took the next train to Hackettstown. Two days later the *Sun* came out with the solution of the mystery.

While he walked and talked and rode with the others, still in a corner of his mind Tyler had been studying his case. The murdered girl's dress at the back had shown some minute splinters of wood. These had been assumed to be torn from the rails of the fence through which the body had been dragged. Did they really come from that fence? In the murdered girl's hair had been found minute traces of whitish dust. This had been assumed to be dust from the road. It seemed to Tyler like the dust of anthracite ashes. No one knew where the murder had been committed. Anthracite ashes: wooden splinters. Was the place a cellar—a cellar of a house that had a wooden floor, a house where anthracite coal was used?

This was but a feeble clew; in every Hackettstown house anthracite coal was used, and the trifle of dust in the hair might not be ashes at all. But studying his case as he rode he recalled one of those mental photographs that we take daily and never heed. He had seen anthracite ashes removed that day from a Hackettstown house; from a large building a few hundred feet from the spot where the

body had been found, a building occupied by a famous boarding school for girls. Inasmuch as the only apparent plan of determining his questions was to examine cellar floors he determined to begin by visiting this school.

On a pretense he got the janitor to take him into the basement, which contained the heating apparatus of the establishment and had a separate entrance from the campus. He found that part of the floor was of rough planks; in a corner were piled ashes from the furnace. The planked part of the floor, he noticed, was between the ash heap and the door that gave upon the campus.

Tyler cultivated the janitor and studied him. When chance offered he got splinters from the plank floor and dust from the ash heap. The girl's clothing was at the police station. He took his splinters there; also his dust of ashes. The splinters were identical with the minute fragments that still adhered to the dress; about the collar he found traces of ashes.

He now returned to the fact that the murdered girl had been acquainted with the janitor and discovered that she had even visited him in the basement. He went back to the school and took another minute observation of the janitor, now putting him upon the grill. Thence he went away with evidence to his mind conclusive, and wrote one of the most skillfully constructed stories I have ever read. On its appearance the janitor was arrested. Subsequently he confessed.

This was a mystery solved by reason, diligence, and study. The next instance I select shows those qualities and likewise reveals something of the resources of the modern newspaper. On a day in the early spring of 1892 a well-dressed man of courteous manners and carrying in one hand a satchel, entered the office of Russell Sage and

quietly asked for an interview with that eccentric genius. When he came face to face with Mr. Sage he genially explained that the satchel contained a large quantity of dynamite and unless Mr. Sage should give him instantly one million dollars he would throw the satchel upon the floor and blow up the building. Mr. Sage edged himself behind one of his clerks and refused. The visitor cast the satchel upon the floor and the terrific explosion that followed blew the office to fragments, rocked the building, shook Broadway, broke two ancient tombstones in Trinity church yard on the other side of Rector Street, and resounded in the *Herald* office half a mile away, where I sat pasting together my last week's string.

When the smoke and dust cleared away it was seen that the strange visitor had also annihilated himself. Nothing could be found of him except his head, his shoes, some shocking indications of his body, and minute pieces of his clothing. The mystery was his identity. Mr. Sage (when he recovered), his surviving clerks, and many other persons looked upon that dreadful head and could give no clew as to the man; all of Superintendent Byrnes's detectives, including those clever men that watched Wall Street, were equally at fault. Who was this well-dressed, polite stranger that had caused this boundless sensation by attacking and (nearly killing) one of the richest men in the world?

Isaac D. White, of the New York *World*, the accomplished reporter to whom I have before referred in these annals, secured a bit of the clothing, two inches long, having upon it a trousers button that bore the single word "Brooks." On a blind chance he undertook to find a tailor named "Brooks." In a few minutes correspondents and reporters of the *World* in fifty cities were searching directories and compiling all the tailor Brookses. Those in New York,

Brooklyn, Jersey City, and Newark having been quickly tried out to no result, Mr. White started for Boston, whence was reported a tailor "Brooks" that had a large business with well-to-do men. Mr. White put his torn fragment of clothing before this Boston Brooks; the tailor at a glance identified the number of the goods, and turned to his records; and the next day the *World* swept the journalistic field bare with an exclusive identification of the man with the satchel. He had been a Boston broker and had gone insane.

The reporter's work demands also presence of mind and readiness of wit, of which truth the next two incidents are illustrations. When the Cunard line steamer Oregon was sunk mysteriously off Fire Island, the Lloyd steamer Ems was close behind her inbound and took off all her passengers. News of the accident was telegraphed up from Fire Island light, but the work of transferring the passengers took hours and as day closed before it was done, the captain of the Ems decided to anchor where he was for the night and to come up to the city the next day. The morning newspapers had combined to hire a tug to cover the story. When the tug arrived alongside the captain of the Ems allowed all the reporters to come aboard, but when they had obtained the facts and interviewed the passengers they suddenly found to their amazement that the captain would not allow them to return to their tug. To all arguments, prayers, pleadings, and explanations he was deaf, and to make sure that his orders should be obeyed he assigned to each reporter two brawny sailor sons of the Fatherland with instructions to put any reporter in irons that tried to leave the steamer.

Attempts to dodge these encumbrances having failed and this being years before Marconi, the reporters were now in a desperate situation. Their newspapers had but the

bare fact that one of the most famous steamers afloat had been sunk at the doors of the city, but they had not a detail nor a name and at this rate would assuredly get none.

The New York *Times* on this occasion was represented by an excellent reporter named Thomas Fielders. He went to the upper deck and surveyed the distance to the rolling tug below. Then he unbuttoned his coat and swiftly climbed upon the rail. His two sailor guards, with a glad cry, grabbed at him and seized the coat. Fielders threw his arms up, the coat slipped over his head and came free, and he shot down to the deck of the tug where, by good hap, he landed on his feet. Then he called up to his associates to throw down their copy. They let go with all they had or could write, and Fielders took the tug up to New York, arriving in time to supply every morning newspaper.

This was a case where a reporter violated the traditional rule of the craft that every newspaper man should serve only the journal that employed him and seek in all ways to surpass and embarrass that journal's rivals. Fielders put the interest of the community above the rules of the competitive game and the community got the news to which it was entitled.

Courage, also, the reporter must have as well as ready wit.

In the early spring of 1884 international affairs were enlivened by an acute war scare between Russia and Great Britain. It was the old nightmare of the Russian advance upon the northern outposts of the British Empire in India, but this time it was made to the world fairly plausible. Newspapers grew hysterical at the reported facts; books were written to prove that Russia was really at the gates of Herat and elsewhere to the detriment of the British; and the American wheat market soared at what seemed to be the certain prospect of war.

While the excitement was greatest the British cruiser Calypso (or some such name; classical, I know) came into New York Bay and anchored off Tompkinsville, Staten Island. The next day we were astounded to learn that a Russian cruiser had slipped in after her and was anchored in the Horseshoe, inside the Hook.

This looked like business and the New York newspapers on their menus served it daily with the proper relish. Captain Paul Boyton, who was a good Irishman as well as a good inventor, had patented a life-saving rubber suit for accidents at sea and it occurred to him that the occasion was excellent for hurling defiance at perfidious Albion, ridiculing the British navy, advertising his invention, and having some needed diversion, for the winter had been dull. So he communicated in confidence to every city editor a rare design. In his rubber suit he would float down to the Calypso at night, under the very eyes of her watch he would fasten an imitation torpedo to her hull, and slip away without being seen; thus showing how easily in war time the whole British navy could be blown at the moon.

The city editors were in no way adverse to a story of such dimensions and interest and each morning paper sent a reporter upon the excursion. Having thus assembled his party in the early evening, the agreeable captain took it down to Tompkinsville, where it made the acquaintance of Deputy Sheriff Mullins of Richmond County, a sturdy Irishman and strong partisan of the captain's. About midnight Boyton and the reporters got into a row-boat and pushed off for the British navy. It appears that Mr. Mullins scented trouble or believed in being at all times wary of the wily Briton: at least he declared that he would be on guard at the pier head until all were safely returned.

It was a dark night, and at first they could but guess which of the vessels lying in the stream was the Calypso. They rowed up, for it was ebb tide, and then drifted down until Boyton thought they were in a favorable position. Then he adjusted his suit, got his imitation torpedo, and slipped overboard, ordering the boatman to keep the boat about where it was. They could now plainly make out the Calypso; they lay not more than five hundred feet directly above her, and they could even discern some of the guns pointed straight at them with a business-like and highly disagreeable suggestion. They could also hear the armed watch on deck, a circumstance that added nothing to their joy considering the fact that if one of the watch discovered Boyton playing any tricks about the hull, the first thing would be to shoot and the next to ask questions, the result of which sequel of events might be some conspicuous vacancies in the staffs of New York's foremost newspapers.

Boyton drifted silently down until he came close to the cruiser, when he discovered that she had her torpedo netting down, which was a very unusual thing in a friendly port. Here was an obstacle he had not counted upon. He slipped along until he found a place where he could get through the netting. Then he made his way to the bow and successfully attached his fake torpedo to the ram.

As he was climbing through the netting on his way back the Celt within him surged high, and in the name of dear old Erin he flung scorn upon the British oppressor.

"Hey, you British lubbers!" he yelled aloud, "look what's on your bow! Look at the torpedo there that can blow you to hell! Great seamen you are, aren't you? Look at your bow! Look at your bow!"

If any part of the watch was asleep it must have been

awakened effectually by this challenge. There was the sound of many heavy feet running hastily along the deck, followed by words of command, and the craning of necks over the bulwarks, and then hails as the row-boat was discovered.

Boyton had a paddle as part of his outfit and swiftly made his way back to the row-boat. The boatman bent to the oars and they started shoreward.

They had made but a short distance when a cutter was put overboard from the cruiser, and came flying over the water after them. It was filled with armed men, and a gruff voice ordered them to stop rowing, which, I may observe, they did without waiting to be told twice.

The cutter ranged up alongside, a squad of marines and an officer leaped aboard and took them all prisoners, and the next thing they knew they were dragged aboard the Calypso and arraigned before the officer in charge, who was a young lieutenant. The captain was asleep in his stateroom.

The lieutenant ordered them to be ironed and locked up until the captain could deal with the case.

Among the reporters was James Creelman, whose courage, presence of mind, and readiness of wit have been proved since in many trying emergencies, including those of a score of battlefields. Mr. Creelman now stood forward and in a manner perfectly cool but determined and aggressive said:

"This thing has gone far enough. I am an American citizen. I demand to know by what right I am seized in American waters by British sailors and brought on board a British ship. I demand the instant release of myself and my party and I can assure you that the matter will not end even at that."

The young lieutenant was greatly taken aback by this outburst. He was inexperienced and not well informed about international matters. In a much milder tone he asked Creelman to explain what he meant by dodging suspiciously in a row-boat about Her Majesty's war vessel and shouting forth challenges about a torpedo.

Mr. Creelman promptly declined to explain anything.

"I demand my instant release. You have committed an outrage for which there is no warrant or excuse. I am an American citizen in the pursuit of my regular and lawful calling and you have not the slightest right to interfere with me. Let me tell you that I represent the New York *Herald,* this gentleman the New York *World,* this the New York *Sun,* this the New York *Times,* this the New York *Tribune,* this the New York *Star.* And as surely as you stand there these newspapers to-day will unite in a formal complaint to the Secretary of State against your action and a demand for an apology from the government of Great Britain."

I think it was the last touch that finished the young lieutenant. Anyway, he released the party with an expression of regret. They got into the row-boat and started for Tompkinsville.

Misgivings must have seized the lieutenant or he awoke the captain to tell him what had happened or the captain came on deck of his own accord. At all events, the Boytons had not made the shore when they were aware of another cutter from the cruiser rowing rapidly toward them with armed men and another gruff voice began to order them to halt.

By this time daylight was beginning to break. They were within two hundred feet of the pier, and there upon its end they saw Deputy Sheriff Mullins of Richmond

County, standing stern and watchful at his post, gathering the points of the situation.

The cutter was coming on swiftly, while with but one pair of oars the Boytons could make slow progress. It looked as if the cutter would sweep alongside before they could make the pier.

And then was revealed to all men the greatness and the worth of Mullins. He drew a revolver from his pocket, he strode to the extreme end of the pier, he pointed the weapon at the advancing cutter, and then he spake in tones of thunder and to this effect:

"Halt! I am the deputy sheriff of Richmond County, State of New York. You are now within the jurisdiction of that county. In the name of Richmond County, State of New York, United States of America, I command you to stop, and if you pull another stroke on them oars I'll blow you full of holes."

The officer in charge of the cutter ordered his men to stop rowing. Then he took a good, considerate observation of Mullins and the shore, and ordered his crew to pull back to the cruiser.

So the reporters got safely to their offices and wrote the story about the imitation torpedo and it was cabled to Europe, where it caused measureless disgust in the naval circles of Great Britain.

Before long the Calypso pulled up her anchors and went to Halifax, which is in British waters. And there a Court of Inquiry was held about the young lieutenant that released the reporters and I regret to say that he was cashiered from the service.

But these incidents, you will say, partake more of the vicissitudes of a life of rude action than of anything connected with literature.

Then let me say that for each of these I could cite ten instances where the work of the reporter was strictly within the literary limits. Let me mention an example.

For several years in New York City it was a fashion among the newspapers to make much of Thanksgiving Day as an occasion of general good will and kindliness. On Thanksgiving Day, 1896, I sent David Graham Phillips, then a reporter on the *World* staff, to the Montefiore Home for Incurables to write a story about Thanksgiving Day among the patients there. You will see that this was at once a bold and a delicate assignment and could be handled by none but an artist of skill, knowledge, and sympathy. For men and women condemned to death by incurable maladies,—what call had they to be thankful, or how could this day of general rejoicing mean to them anything but mockery? Mr. Phillips took the assignment with a full understanding of the difficulties and wrote of it a story that was a classic. It had for its text Morituri Salutamus, and yet for all its somber material he made of it a thing that was sweet and gracious if thoughtful, and tempered the high note of the rest of the page with the needed suggestion of life as it really is.

The next morning I was coming to the office on a bridge train and the man that sat next to me was reading Phillips's story. He hung upon it with intense interest to the close, laid the paper upon his knee, tapped it with his forefinger, and turning to me, said in words that brought back to me my ragamuffin of olden days:

"By ——! That is not newspaper writing; that is literature!"

It was no less. Life as it is and portrayed with vividness and conviction to the reader—what better literature? And hardly a day passed without some such contribution to the

world's delight or its knowledge. An old landmark hotel that stood in Frankfort Street below Park Row was to be torn down. I sent Rudolph Block ("Bruno Lessing") to write of it. He went about and found that an old lady had lived thirty years in one room in that hotel. She had not a relative on earth and the very window casements were dear to her. If Block's story had appeared elsewhere than in a newspaper it would have been hailed as a notable achievement in style and construction. A man died in the alcoholic ward of Bellevue Hospital. Ernest McCready found in his life the materials for a marvelous story of weird psychology. Julian Ralph went to a National Convention. In five hundred words he managed to make every reader feel the conflicting passions that raged there. Tyler accompanied to the doors of Sing Sing a once honored city officer convicted of bribe taking. You heard the steel gates banging upon a ruined life.

So from these multi-colored strands the woven product comes forth the next morning. Life, real life, pictured by artists—to put it together day by day, what task could have been more fascinating? And yet it was even in my time a stage of newspaper development already beginning to decay. It was inevitable that the period of "good stories" should go down before the many assaults that were made upon it, mostly in the way of evolution. The telephone, for instance, saved time and helped the gathering of news, but it abolished much of the old style of reporters' art. One man now went out upon a story and another man sat in the office and from a brief outline jumbled over a telephone, wrote the narrative. The ablest genius on earth could not produce "good stories" in that way. The typewriter greatly improved the legibility of copy and hastened its production, but few men can compose

on the typewriter in terse, compact, nervous, vigorous English; the facility afforded by the machine is too great. The change from the space system to salaries effected economies, but it lost us the best in the old style of newspaper writing. The introduction of the half-tone and the use of the camera made the newspapers of a more striking interest, but they rendered the finest phase of the reporters' art comparatively unnecessary.

But the greatest of all the transforming forces at work was the rise of the department store, added to the fact that because of a blind and stupid competition the newspapers had come to a condition in which they were manufactured at a loss, since the sales price did not cover the cost of the white paper in each average copy. Under this condition advertising in great quantities became absolutely indispensable to the paper's existence. Much and very strange discussion is sometimes made as to whether newspapers are controlled by their advertisements. On this nothing more need be said than to refer to this pivotal and indisputable fact. In the very nature of existing conditions they are and must be so controlled. It is not a matter of will nor of design nor of preference; it is a sheer matter of economic fact resulting from economic necessity, always the determining factor of human life. Those that dispute the control must seem foolish to all that understand economic fundamentals, and at least as foolish to those that like myself have sat long on the inside of the machine, have seen the strings at work, and helped lustily to pull them.

As the steadily developing department store became more and more the dispenser of the great advertising that the newspaper must have or perish, the newspaper began to develop as an appendage of the department store,

which is its present stage of evolution. And as the department store tends always to become greater and more important and to be drawn into more intimate relations with the sources from which it gets its capital, the whole process is clearly one of unification, simplification, and combination in which the newspaper, as an appendage of the department store, will move with the rest and in the same direction.

But this does not mean that we are to have worse newspapers; it seems to me that in the end we shall have much better. Agreeable as it is now to recall the days of the good story, and the highest achievement of the reporting art in its old form, the fact remains that the world has no need of good newspaper stories; it has no need of "exclusives"; it has no need of newspapers trying to surpass and outwit one another; it has no need of the art that here I have been celebrating. It has need of food, clothing, and shelter. More and more the department store is becoming the great reservoir of our supplies of the things we need. Its close alliance with the newspaper is not, in the last analysis, a subject for regret. Gone are the good old days, and probably that is the best thing we can say about them. Much better days are to come. That a newspaper should be published as an accessory of the augmenting department store, source of our indispensable supplies, is repugnant to romance but not to common sense. Out of this condition will come in time the ideal newspaper, which can be produced only as a communal enterprise; which will be published for information and not for profit; which will not attempt to combine the two desirable but properly distinct functions of telling us how goes the progress of the world and where to get hams. Meanwhile, as the fact of to-day's stage in that progression is becoming

well recognized by the public, whatever harm may be implied is but a fleeting matter; whether we like it or not, it is a change destined and inevitable, having its due place in evolution and therefore in the end working good to mankind.

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